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Facts & Figures

The FASFC - at the service of food safety

Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain

.be

Our task is to guarantee
the safety of the food chain
and the quality of our food
in order to protect the health
of humans, animals and plants.

Editor in Chief

Gil Houins, Chief Executive Officer
Federal Agency for Safety of the Food Chain
Boulevard du Jardin Botanique, 55 - 1000 Brussels

Final editing

Yasmine Ghafir - Paul Coosemans - Lieve Busschots

Page layout and graphics

FASFC Communication Service
Gert Van Kerckhove – Jan Germonpré

Printing

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A report summarising all activities of the FASFC
in 2012 is available on our website: www.afsca.be

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Foreword

This year, true to the transparency policy that forms part of its values, the food agency has once again published a highly detailed annual report that everyone can inspect on our website www.afsca.be. In this document, we are pleased to be able to provide you with a shorter version of this report.

The early years of the FASFC were devoted to implementing the new structure, and developing procedures and a rigorous monitoring culture. This was fully justified after the crises we encountered, to regain the confidence of both consumers and the foreign clients of our agri-food sector.

However, the crackdown has had limitations: if a stakeholder in the food chain is unfamiliar with the regulations (and they are numerous), if no one tells him how to practice his trade, crackdowns alone will lead little improvement.

For this reason, since 2003, the FASFC has encouraged sector professionals to put together and share “self-checking guides” with the aim of making individual operators aware of their obligations to ensure their products are safe.



To the same end, an information service was set up to help the B2C segment closest to the consumer and, paradoxically, those who score less well at the end of our inspections.

The 2012 report demonstrates these choices are gradually bearing fruit: today, 95% of food chain operators are supported by a guide for carrying out their work, and last year, more than 7,200 restaurateurs, butchers, bakers, grocers or students in these industries have benefited from training courses run by our information service.

Thanks to the completed computerization of our data, we have been able to show that hygiene, and the results of inspections have clearly improved in companies that have undertaken this free training.

Because of this, the Minister responsible for the FASFC, Madame Sabine Laruelle expressed the desire to make these B2C guides available free of charge to these operators. This has been achieved, since they are now available online at the Agency’s website.

Around 20.000 operators throughout the chain have already requested an audit, and have been certified for risk management (self-checking) based on these guides.

In the present economic climate, the Agency also considered that our exporters should be the focus of our attention as well.

The LEAN method – well known in the industry- was thus applied to all our procedures leading to certification of products for export, and the expansion of our international relations service.

In close consultation with the economic sectors involved, Foreign and Regional Affairs, the objective is clearly an improved service for exporters whilst maintaining the high reputation of our certificates.

The result of analysing more than 70.000 samples has demonstrated that food safety in our country has achieved an extremely high level.

The new president of the FEVIA has launched an ambitious and widely publicised 'Food.be' program so that this becomes more widely known and is used by Belgian producers on foreign markets.

The improvement year after year of the food safety barometer in Belgium should also help us in this regard.

We can be proud of the level of safety of our products, and should tell everyone. Expo Milan 2015, at which the FASFC will be present in the Belgian Pavilion, will be such an opportunity.

Happy reading!

Gil Houins, C.E.O

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THE FASFC
at the service
of food safety

1

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) was founded by the Act of 4 February 2000. It is a federal executive agency, which is responsible firstly, for the assessment and the management of risks that may be harmful to the health of consumers and/or to the health of animals and plants and secondly, for carrying out food safety controls throughout the entire food chain.



The Executive Committee of the FASFC

1. Our resources

To carry out its inspections in 2012, the FASFC worked with:

- 1.323 collaborators, including 724 in the 11 provincial control units (UPC);
- 660 independent veterinarians on assignment, equivalent to around 385 ETP, who carry out control visits (mostly pre- and post-mortem inspections at abattoirs, animal welfare inspections) and certification, under the supervision of officials. When they carry out tasks for the FASFC, they are considered to be acting as official veterinarians;
- 5 ISO 17.025 accredited internal laboratories staffed by 151 employees;
- a network of 59 external laboratories approved by the FASFC in addition to 9 national reference laboratories;
- a budget of €179,5 million;
- close collaboration with various federal and regional public services, including the police and customs.

Central Services are mainly responsible for:

- general coordination, internal and systems control, quality and environment,
- the development of operational regulations,
- the assessment of the risks that might affect the safety of the food chain,
- the development of inspection and analysis programmes based on risk assessment, and the reporting of results,
- the organisation of the controls in the field (control plan),
- consultation with the sectors and national and international bodies including the European Commission and the OIE,
- monitoring of international relations with third countries,
- coordination of laboratory analyses,
- communications between operators and consumers, including management of the point of contact for the latter,

- the prevention and management of crises,
- mediation service for operators, coordinating checks to combat fraud.

Our budget

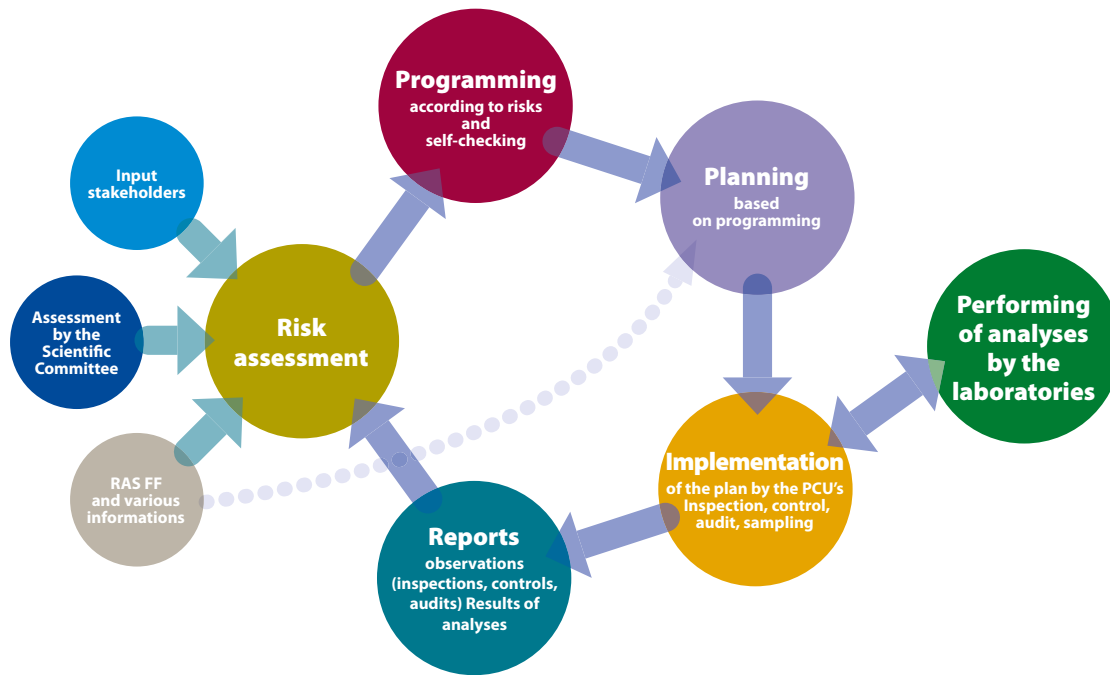
Revenue for the FASFC

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Public funding | 108.471.000 € (60,5 %) | 107.993.000 € (57,5 %) | 106.147.000 € (57,7 %) |
| Contributions | 26.514.000 € (14,8 %) | 30.084.000 € (16,0 %) | 29.957.000 € (16,3 %) |
| Fees | 36.740.000 € (20,5 %) | 40.215.000 € (21,4 %) | 37.422.000 € (20,4 %) |
| Financial support of the European Union | 2.637.000 € (1,5 %) | 3.362.000 € (1,8 %) | 2.990.000 € (1,6 %) |
| Others | 4.938.000 € (2,8 %) | 6.086.000 € (3,2 %) | 7.415.000 € (4,0 %) |
| Total income | 179.300.000 € | 187.740.000 € | 183.931.000 € |

FASFC Expenditure

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Personnel | 51,9% | 51,7% | 55,8% |
| Wages and salaries | 76.872.000 € | 81.188.000 € | 85.390.000 € |
| Other personnel costs | 6.774.000 € | 7.260.000 € | 6.445.000 € |
| Operations | 47,0% | 47,0% | 42,9% |
| Operating costs related to personnel | 8.208.000 € | 8.221.000 € | 7.695.000 € |
| Information and Communication Technologies [ICT] | 5.425.000 € | 7.351.000 € | 7.268.000 € |
| External veterinary services | 29.101.000 € | 27.744.000 € | 26.886.000 € |
| External laboratories | 18.384.000 € | 20.168.000 € | 19.910.000 € |
| Repayment of cash advances 2005 (ESB expenses) | 4.285.000 € | 6.715.000 € | 0 € |
| Other operating expenses | 10.338.000 € | 10.213.000 € | 8.922.000 € |
| Investments | 1,1% | 1,3% | 1,3% |
| Appliances, furniture, ICT | 1.725.000 € | 2.221.000 € | 2.060.000 € |
| Total expenditure | 161.112.000 € | 171.081.000 € | 164.576.000 € |

2. The core process of the FASFC



The FASFC ensures that operators involved in the food chain meet the regulatory requirements. In order to check the quality of products released into the food chain, the FASFC:

- inspects equipment and the hygiene measures implemented;
- verifies the implementation of self-checking and traceability systems;
- controls products (analyses and label controls)..

The common thread of our approach to implementing control processes is:

respect, objectivity (“Charte du contrôleur” – charter of control officers) and a constant aim to improve our working methods and increase their effectiveness.

A multi-annual national control plan: the MANCP

The Food Agency is developing a multi-annual integrated national control plan (abbr.: MANCP) under (EC Regulation) No 882/2004. This plan describes the strategies and organizations put in place to ensure effective control of the entire food chain. It has been developed with the aim of ensuring a high level of food safety, whilst using the available work force efficiently.

Apart from the FASFC, other bodies are also involved in this MANCP, including the FPS (Federal Public Service) Public Health, the FAMHP (Medicines Agency), the multidisciplinary Hormones unit, the FANC (Nuclear Agency), the Customs & Excise Authority, the regional authorities and the FPS Economy as well as some other external inspection bodies.

The duration and strategic and operational objectives of the MANCP follow those of the business plan of the C.E.O. of the FASFC. A new MANCP cycle started in 2012 with the new business plan for 2012-2014.

Amendments to the MANCP, along with the results of inspections, are sent annually to the European Commission. This report is based on the activities of the FASFC. The MANCP is available on our website.

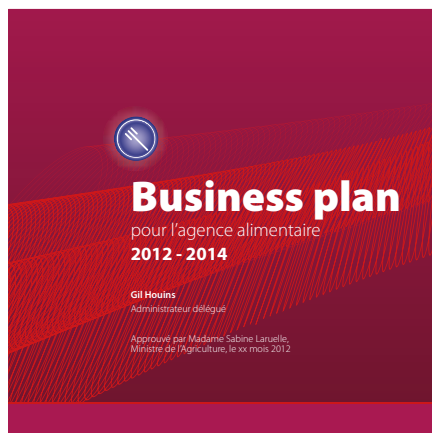
Business plan

The new FASFC business plan for 2012-2014 ensures not only continuity with the 3 previous business plans, but the active participation of consumers, operators and their respective organizations too, via satisfaction surveys and SWOT investigations carried out between 2009 - 2011. It focuses in particular on improving services to exporters, whilst maintaining the credibility of FASFC certificates, as well as the pursuit of administrative simplification.

Strategic priorities for the FASFC for 3 years:

1. A safer food chain
2. An agency accepted by operators and recognized by society and consumers in particular,
3. Administrative simplification
4. International business : through an improved service for exporters and an agency recognised at an international level
5. An ambitious computerisation plan
6. Reliable and efficient laboratories
7. A transparent agency
8. The extension of self-checking within the food chain
9. Modern management of human resources

These 9 strategic objectives have been translated into 211 operational objectives; 96 % of the 24 objectives planned for the end of 2012 have been achieved, including adaptation of Royal Decree contributions, implementation of monitoring controls, the publication of guidelines about the conservation of foodstuffs and the relaxation of traceability rules for food banks and charitable organizations.



3. A professional organisation sets high standards for itself

Operator's satisfaction survey

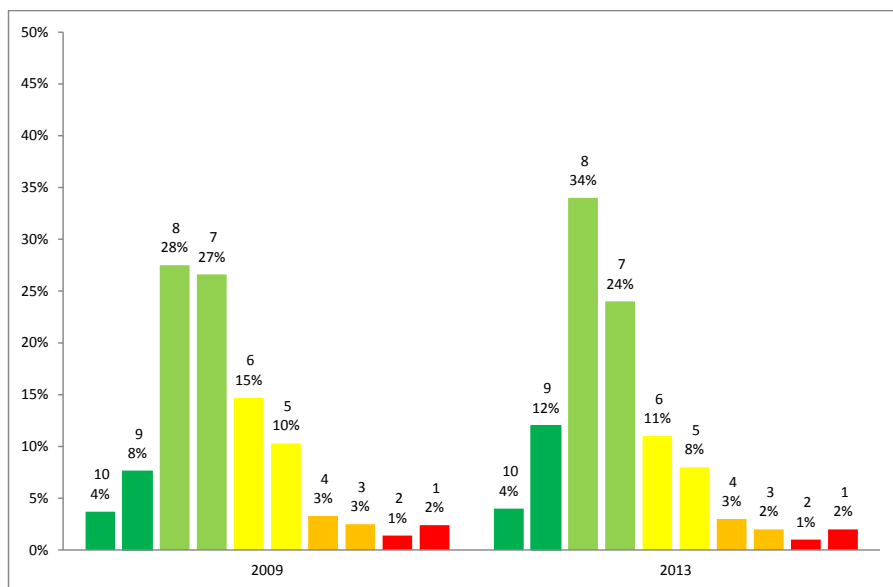
The FASFC aims to fulfil its duties whilst meeting the best expectations of society. Therefore, as provided for in the FASFC business plan, a satisfaction survey was organized amongst the operators it regulates, at the request of the FPS Personnel and Organisation, which was conducted by a private company.

27.910 operators who had been checked in 2011-2012 were surveyed: 6.863 responded anonymously to the survey, more than 24% of those polled (21% in 2009). We wanted to know their opinions about the FASFC and its progress since 2009: how they felt about the checks, how they assess the services of the FASFC... After a detailed analysis of the results, various actions for improving our relationships with operators and our way of working will be suggested. They will lead to a consultation between the Advisory Committee and the sectors

The results revealed a very positive assessment of the FASFC, which was considered as having proved its professionalism (91%) and contribution towards improving the safety of the food chain and the reliability of Belgian products (94%). For 89% of the operators, the inspection report correctly reflected the actual situation of their business.

To what extent are you satisfied with the services provided by the FASFC?

Give a rating from 1 to 10 for your overall assessment of the work of the FASFC [n=6.704]



Besides the great satisfaction with the services provided by the FASFC, the results showed an improvement in satisfaction in comparison to 2009 (median: 8/10).

The full report of this survey is available on the website: www.sondagepeiling.be.

Quality and environment

In 2012, the integrated quality-safety - environment system of the Agency reached its cruising speed: ISO 9001 certification, EMAS registration and ISO 17020 accreditation for inspection activities, plus ISO 17025 accreditation for laboratories activities. Hard work in these matters is continuing on a daily basis. In 2012, the focus was put on consolidating and improving this acquisition by analysing the processes for optimizing the use of resources (LEAN projects), particularly in international relations, finance, legal services and HR amongst others. Initiatives have also been launched for risk management, for example, in matters related to heritage protection and to efficiently organise handling of the Agency's documents and archives. Experience sharing with other public bodies is used to increase the effectiveness of such projects.

Internal control

Implementation of internal checks at the FASFC was strengthened in 2012 by the integration of a new risk management process in the QSE (quality - safety - environment) system. Early identification and assessment of risks and existing control measures started in 2011, and resulted in the risk registers for the various entities of the FASFC.

The rest of the process was constructed in 2012 with the planning of additional control measures and monitoring of these activities, particularly through management reviews. The FASFC ensures maximum integration of the principles, procedures, internal control tools and ISO standards.

Internal audits

Conducting internal audits is both a European (Regulation (EC) N° 882/2004) and a national (Royal Decree of August 17, 2007) requirement. It is also a mandatory step for (certification or accreditation) validating the quality management systems in place within the FASFC.

In 2012, the FASFC conducted 95 internal audits; as a result of 12 follow-up audits, 144 recommendations had been checked; 88% having been completed as the result of effective corrective actions to prevent repetition of the failures in the future.

Inspections and audits of the European Commission

The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission, responsible for verifying the effectiveness of checks conducted by national competent authorities in the food chain, carried out 5 visits to Belgium in 2012.

They focused on checks during the slaughter and processing of fresh meat (including horses), the production of farmed rabbit meat and gelatine intended for human consumption, phytosanitary checks for imports, the application of requirements for organic fertilizers and soil amendments as well as the checking systems for protected geographical indications (PGI) and protected designations of origin (PDO) and guaranteed traditional specialities (TSG) for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

In addition, in September the FVO conducted a general follow-up audit, to assess implementation of the previous recommendations addressed to the Belgian authorities. This audit allowed 46 of the 70 open to be closed as completed, and resulted in an update of the “country profile” relating to Belgium being published on the FVO website.

Reports of these visits were published on the FVO website: (http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.cfm).

4. International relations

In 2012, the FASFC has received 21 foreign delegations. At these events, the operations and tasks of the FASFC were discussed. Special attention was given to the preservation of our export markets and 23 bilateral agreements or certificates were concluded or developed for 14 foreign countries.

THE FASFC has also continued its cooperation with Benin to support the development of the Benin Agency for the safety of foodstuffs (ABSSA) and its food safety-testing laboratory: it carried out three visits in 2012.

Several bilateral agreements were concluded after discussions with third countries, and new certificates have been established for exports to the following countries:

- South Africa (bovine serum of non-Belgian origin),
- Australia (pig meat),
- Belarus (gelatine and/or collagen, day old chicks, poultry meat),
- China (pig meat),
- Russian Federation (gelatine and/or collagen, day old chicks, poultry meat, slaughter meat),
- Kazakhstan (gelatine and/or collagen, poultry meat),
- Macedonia (animal foodstuffs),
- New Zealand (milk and dairy products),
- Philippines (porcine semen),
- Serbia (fish-based products, meat-based products),
- Tunisia (ornamental birds),
- Ukraine (milk and dairy products),
- Uruguay (horse semen and embryos),
- Vietnam (pork meat)

Exportation of pork meat

At the technical veterinary level, all barriers to the export of Belgian pork to China, Vietnam and Australia have now been removed. It is now up to institutions to take advantage of these opportunities, with the support of regional export organizations.

These market openings demonstrate that close collaboration with all relevant links is essential to handle files efficiently and to make Belgian exports a 'success story'. This is why the FASFC regularly organises consultative meetings. During the Decem-

ber 2012 meeting, professional federations, the FPS Foreign Affairs and regional export organizations all showed their determination to continue their work in the same way, and in the interest of everyone.

Benchmarking between food agencies

In the setting of an informal dialogue between the European food safety agencies ("Heads of Agencies"), a pilot project to compare the operations of the agencies with similar duties was completed in 2012. Aside from the FASFC, agencies from the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Denmark and Finland took part.

Each agency first carried out a self-assessment, based on a questionnaire about the KPI (key performance indicators) relating to the organization and the implementation of official checks and management processes. On basis of this pilot exercise, a certain number of good practices were identified, including consumer information systems such as the Danish smiley, setting up an evaluation program based on risks, as used by the FASFC, and the recording and measurement of activities and results such as the Belgian Barometer for food chain safety.

During the meeting of the "Heads of Agencies" in December 2012, in Cyprus, it was decided to extend (on a voluntary basis) this exercise. Themed meetings and workshops will be organised on the topics of good practice and questionnaires.

Towards an improved service for exportation

Since the economic crisis of 2008, exports have acquired an increased importance.

This growing interest has to be sustained in a professional and effective manner by the authorities; the FASFC must therefore re-double its efforts for those products over which it has control competence.

Clear and transparent procedures, structured communications, better definition of responsibilities... it is always possible to improve. A LEAN project was therefore launched to improve the quality of export services over the short and medium term, based on an in depth analysis of the realities and procedures.

This analysis highlighted the weaknesses and gaps in the processes. Next, action plans were developed for 2012, 2013 and

2014 for the few exceptions. These actions fitted in perfectly with the fourth strategic objective of the business plan: «International trade: towards a better service for exporters and an agency recognized at the international level”.

Since then, the International Affairs Directorate and the Import, Export and Notifications Unit have worked in close collaboration, and services have monitored the records of exports thanks to weekly discussions. The status of files is updated every month and passed on to the ‘stakeholders’. The FASFC is also taking steps to improve information via its web site. Procedures will also increase the efficiency of the services provided, including effective complaints follow-up.

Collaborations with other partners, like regional export promotion bodies and Foreign Affairs are maintained based on a protocol.

Finally, with other partners, the FASFC examines how to optimize their mutual collaborations. In this context, determining priorities for handling exportation records has benefitted from a great deal of attention.

THE FASFC
at the service
of consumers
and professionals



Communication in figures

| | | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Press releases | | 76 | 120 | 129 |
| including product recalls | | 32 % | 48 % | 52 % |
| www.afsca.be : number of visitors | | 703.332 | 774.367 | 854.578 |
| Bulletin | Publications | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| | Postal subscriptions | 3.910 | 3.858 | 3.800 |
| | E-mail subscriptions | 7.937 | 7.950 | 7.730 |
| Point of contact | Questions | 6.408 | 6.902 | 4.163 |
| | Complaints | 4.039 | 4.604 | 4.328 |
| Information service | Sessions | 140 | 216 | 257 |
| | Participants | 4.565 | 5.660 | 7.202 |
| Brochures | Publications | 6 | 9 | 11 |
| Mediation service | Complaints | 178 | 211 | 150 |
| | Complaints about funding | 39 % | 55 % | 37 % |
| | Complaints about the interpretation of regulations, control measure disputes | 36 % | 30 % | 33 % |
| Consultative Committee | Plenary meetings | 8 | 8 | 9 |

1. Transparency

Transparency is one of the values of the FASFC and also one of the strategic objectives of its 2012-2014 business plan. The Agency's external communication and its visibility in the landscape of federal institutions were highlighted as strong points in the SWOT analysis conducted with FASFC stakeholders in 2011.

The policy of transparency at the FASFC has continued with a website www.afsca.be full of information aimed at professionals and consumers, active communication via 2 spokes persons, press releases, the publication of market recalls on its website and new initiatives such as the ability to subscribe to newsletters and the dissemination of news via social media (Twitter and Facebook).



Newsletters

More than 1.800 persons have expressed their interest in new features related to FASFC missions, and have subscribed to the newsletters that it sends out. The newsletter aimed at veterinarians is sent to more than 2.300 subscribers. This clearly shows the interest for this type of information.

Interested? Click on the "Newsletter" tab on the homepage of the FASFC website.



Through its advisory practices, the FASFC contributes
to the fight against food wastage

Market recalls

Any company that is active in the food chain which has reason to believe that a product may be harmful to human, animal or vegetable health must take immediate steps to eliminate the danger (by blocking products, removing them from the market or recalling them), immediately notifying the FASFC and informing its clients and, where necessary, consumers. The measures depend on the type of product and its position in the food chain at the time the problem is discovered.

When necessary, the FASFC will conduct a survey with the accountable supplier and seize the products currently at other clients. If the product has already been sold to consumers and poses a risk to health, they should recall the product by informing consumers through a press release. THE FASFC places these on its web site and distributes them via social media.

In 2012, 65 products were the subject of a recall due to the presence of pathogenic microorganisms (Listeria 17 times and Salmonella on 15 occasions), allergens not mentioned on the product (10), the presence of pesticides (3)...

Conservation de produits: que peut-on encore utiliser et quand?

DLC

Les produits rapidement périssables ont une **date limite de consommation ou DLC** (à consommer jusqu'au...): **ne plus utiliser après dépassement de cette date !**

Par exemple : les viandes fraîches préemballées, le poisson frais préemballé, la charcuterie préemballée, les salades, ...



DDM

Les produits ayant une plus longue durée de conservation ont une **date de durabilité minimale ou DDM**

(à consommer de préférence avant le...):

Ils peuvent encore être consommés après cette date, à condition d'être conservés correctement et que leurs emballages ne soient pas endommagés.

Regardez donc si l'emballage est bien fermé, n'est pas abîmé, si les boîtes de conserves ne sont pas bombées, si le produit a encore un bel aspect, une bonne odeur et un bon goût, ...

Par exemple : les pâtes sèches, biscuits secs, boîtes de conserves, lait UHT, chocolat, ...



Agence fédérale pour la Sécurité de la Chaîne alimentaire

2. At the service of consumers and operators



The point of contact of the FASFC allows consumers to ask questions and to lodge a complaint. All questions and complaints receive appropriate follow-up; observing the response times is a particular point of focus.



**Complaints about
our services?
0800 13 455**

The mediation service takes charge of all complaints relating to FASFC operations. It listens to partners of the FASFC and prioritises operators active in the food chain. This information allows the continuous improvement of FASFC operations.

The FASFC information service helps food chain operators to make themselves compliant with the regulations. By addressing operators in direct contact with consumers (hotels, restaurants and cafes (HORECA), retailers), it organizes training sessions for groups of operators.



Food business operators have direct access to their details through the Foodweb web application (business data, inspection results, contribution status, ...).

Crisis management and prevention

Even though our country was spared from any major incidents in 2012, preventing incidents in the food chain is one of the main concerns of the FASFC.

The FASFC organises annual simulation exercises, which is a proven method for improving the skills of authorities and operators in handling incidents, as well as improving their approach. FASFC crisis prevention does not only involve the prevention of incidents: the FASFC gives equal attention also to limiting their consequences. The prevention and crisis management service contributes in various ways.

In 2012, the prevention and crisis management service organised an exercise in traceability, in collaboration with professional associations for the producers and distributors of potatoes : a second exercise, aimed at FASFC officers, concerned the dispatch of samples in the context of a fictional incident. Other smaller exercises were also organized, as they are every year, to test crisis management procedures. The FASFC also participates in nuclear exercises organized by the Government crisis centre.

For prevention, the uptake of potential crisis signals in a timely manner is essential .

To this end, a project was initiated in 2011. It aims to exploit the information available in the FASFC databases better, and highlight new or under-used external information sources.

In 2012, special attention was spent on the collection and processing of data from consumer points of contact, food-borne diseases and mortality data from farms.

3. Consultation

The **Consultative Committee** of the FASFC provides advice on matters relating to policies to be followed by the FASFC. It is also a platform for dialogue , enabling completely transparent discussion between the FASFC and its partners on topical issues, the development of regulations, funding, barriers to export... This Committee comprises 37 members who represent the main professional sectors, consumer associations and related authorities.

The FASFC also confers regularly with **the sectors**, and represents Belgium at **national and international bodies**, including the European Commission and the OIE. Technical discussions are held several times each year for each professional sector by the FASFC DG control policy services.

Local platforms for collaborations with other services such as the police, customs and local authorities are implemented within provincial control units to facilitate the implementation of joint actions.

The **Scientific Committee** issues independent advice on topics related to the assessment and management of risks in the food chain.

In 2012, 28 advisory notices were published, including 2 rapid notices. These notices can be consulted on the FASFC website. In 2012, the following topics in particular caught the attention of the Scientific Committee: the evaluation of Salmonella action plan in pigs, application of nanotechnologies in the food chain, reducing the salt content and the risks related to the reformulation of foodstuffs (in collaboration with the Conseil Supérieur de la Santé [Superior Health Council]), the presence of human pathogenic E.coli in the food chain, the risk of antibiotic resistance transmission through food, and the risk of reintroducing Schmallenberg virus in Belgium.

Opinions have also produced regarding Royal Decrees, self-checking guides and projects of strategic documents, including the FASFC inspection program, revision of the BSE monitoring programme and the action limits for microbiological contaminants in food.

Our core mission:
inspections

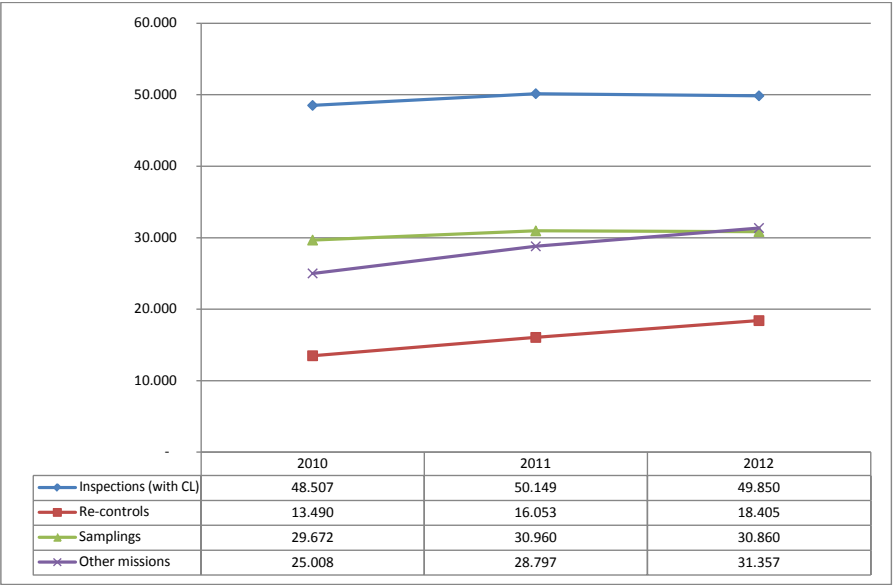


The FASFC performs different types of checks including inspections, during which checklists (CL) are used. These reflect the various controlled items and are available from the FASFC website, so any operator is able to check at any time that its establishment is compliant with the regulations.

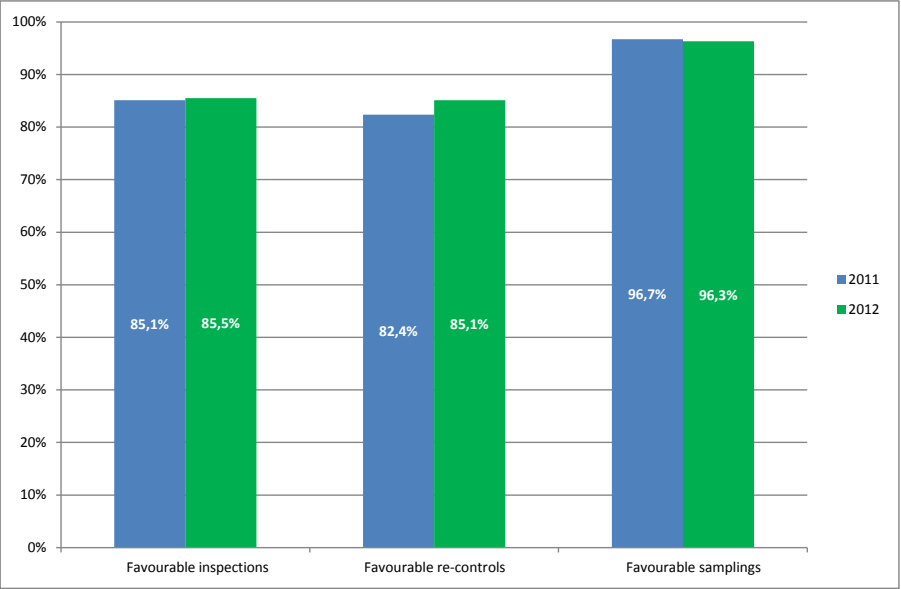
In case of an unfavourable inspection, a re-control is systematically conducted after expiry of the time required for changes to be made. This re-control and other types of controls such as sampling and checks at other operators required by findings in a control, form the subject of a report, not checklists. Different controls can be conducted during a mission (visit to an operator) through the use of several checklists or the completion of an inspection at the same time as taking samples. When taking samples of animal feedstuffs, plants, foodstuffs or testing an animal, one or more samples are collected and then analysed, to either detect the presence of, or quantify the amount of a substances or micro-organisms.

Other visits involve controls without a check-list: investigations following a complaint, to verify the market recall of a particular product, investigations due to a suspected animal disease, a measure towards another operator, as a result of a mandatory notification, for a RASFF, a foodborne outbreak, an irregularity by import or export, an application for approval, an incident in the food chain (traceability of a animal or contaminated product, additional investigations...).

Number of missions
(nature of company visits)



Results of inspections
and samplings



1. Training and support for professionals

1.1. Self-checking systems and sector guides

Numerous initiatives have been taken by the FASFC to facilitate the implementation of self-checking in businesses and to encourage the validation of self-checking systems, with the aim of improving inspection results and reducing non-compliances, by raising operator's awareness of their influence on the safety of the food chain. This policy aims, year after year, to ensure that safer food ends up on the plates of the consumers.

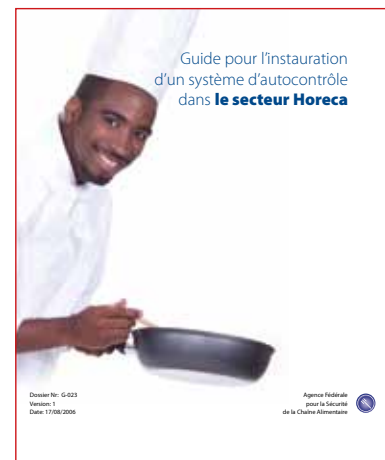
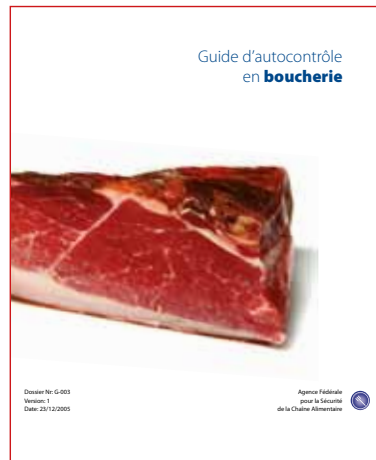
B2C self-checking guides are now under the management of the FASFC

One of the strategic objectives of the 2012-2014 business plan aims to extend self-checking further. A series of concrete measures have therefore been provided for this purpose, including the free provision of guides to self-checking aimed at operators in the B2C sectors.

On the initiative of Minister Laruelle, the Minister responsible for the Agency, an agreement on this subject was reached with the managers of the relevant guides. As a consequence, all future amendments to these guides will be at the discretion of the FASFC, but in close consultation with the sectors/managers concerned.

The FASFC will not only handle modification of these guides, but will also be responsible for printing them and making them freely available on its website. Printed copies will be distributed to all relevant sectoral organisations. When drafting these guides, particular attention will be given to their practical use, including improving their readability, to enable search capabilities and to make any subsequent amendments easier.

The guides "Business to Consumer" (B2C)



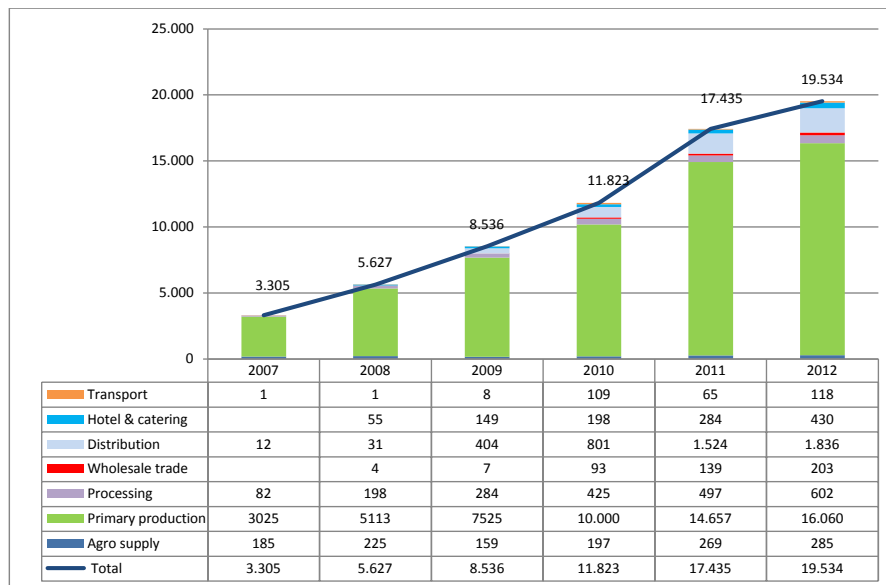
Validation of self-checking systems

Operators who have their self-checking system validated benefit from a decrease in the frequency of inspections by the FASFC and a lower annual subscription. Audits are based on approved self-inspection guides and are performed using checklists prepared by the FASFC in consultation with representatives from the relevant professional associations. For some activities, which are not yet covered by a guide (a guide is available for more than 95% of the operators), the FASFC has implemented specific tools to help businesses.

Audits can be conducted by the FASFC, but are generally carried out by private certification bodies which are accredited and registered (OIC) generally where a guide exists. As well as audits to validate self-checking, these OIC can also carry out private audits of certification based on specifications like Certus, QFL, GMP, IFS, BIO... These “combined audits” allow costs to be reduced.

The number of companies which have their self-checking validated has increased steadily, demonstrating the effectiveness of the policies put in place.

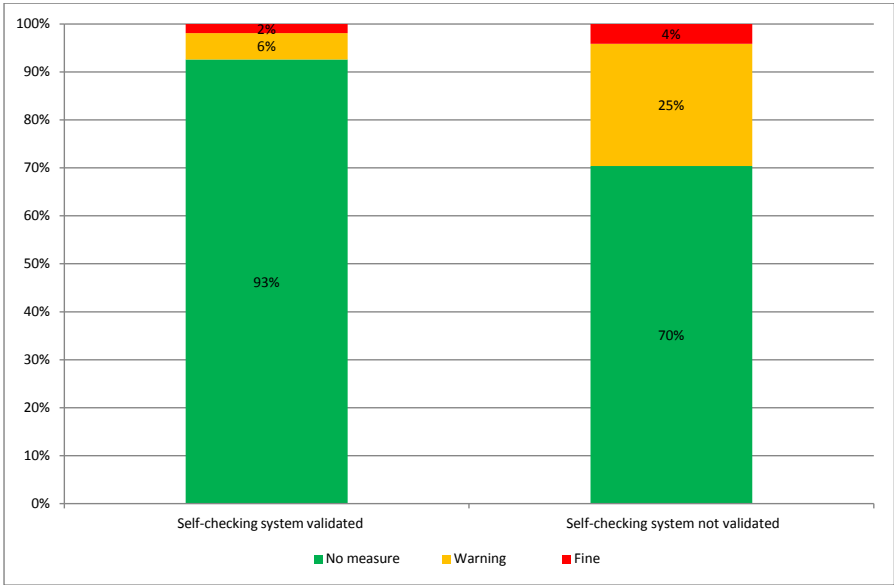
By the end of 2012, 19.534 establishments had a validated self-checking system for all of their activities.



In 2012, the FASFC smiley, which up until then had been reserved for restaurants and industrial kitchens with a validated self-checking system, was extended to all establishments that directly serve foodstuffs to consumers (B2C sector). By the end of 2012, 1.262 establishments were displaying an FASFC- smiley (309 at the end of 2011).



The results of FASFC inspections were significantly more favourable for establishments at which a self-checking system had been validated



2. Inspections and analyses

In 2012, the FASFC conducted 167.629 inspections (based on checklists) during 49.850 missions to 41.215 operators from a total of 144.326 registered operators.

Results of inspections, covering all sectors

| | 2011 | 2012 | 2012 vs. 2011 | Compliance 2011 | Compliance 2012 |
|---|---------|---------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene | 44.292 | 46.482 | +4,9 % | 71,3 % | 74,1 % |
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (before approval) | 296 | 322 | +8,8 % | 92,6 % | 93,2 % |
| Self-checking systems | 17.907 | 17.646 | -1,5 % | 63,2 % | 65,3 % |
| Traceability (including identification and records) | 30.267 | 29.966 | -0,99 % | 92,5 % | 91,6 % |
| Obligatory notification | 21.092 | 21.500 | +1,9 | 97,8 % | 98,2 % |
| Packaging and labelling (including trading standards) | 10.519 | 9.718 | -7,6 % | 90,4 % | 88,4 % |
| Packaging materials | 2.423 | 636 | -73,8 % | 95,4 % | 95,3 % |
| Waste management | 5.863 | 4.332 | -26,1 % | 90,6 % | 90,3 % |
| Transport | 1.505 | 1.569 | +4,3 % | 97,2 % | 97,8 % |
| Smoking ban | 10.483 | 10.718 | +2,2 % | 93,1 % | 93,9 % |
| Phytosanitary testing | 3.133 | 3.368 | +7,5 % | 95,0 % | 94,0 % |
| Pesticides | 2.974 | 2.821 | -5,1 % | 87,2 % | 87,6 % |
| Animal health | 2.935 | 1.720 | -41 % | 95,9 % | 97,9 % |
| Animal welfare | 9.838 | 9.206 | -6,4 % | 97,4 % | 97,3 % |
| Medicines and veterinary guidance | 4.163 | 3.970 | -4,6 % | 97,9 % | 97,3 % |
| Epidemiological surveillance | 3.853 | 3.540 | -8,1 % | 97,1 % | 97,7 % |
| Export authorisation | 0 | 115 | 100 % | NVT | 72,2 % |
| Other | 9 | 0 | -100 % | 88,9 % | NA |
| Total | 171.552 | 167.629 | -2,3 % | 85,1 % | 85,5 % |



Opening of the Wandre (Liege) Laboratory on 16/10/2012

From left to right : Servais Verherstraeten, Secretary of State for Institutional Reform, Building Regulation and Sustainable Development ; Jean-François Heymans, Assistant Chef de Cabinet of Minister Sabine Laruelle ; Geert De Poorter, Director general of Laboratories at the FASFC ; Gil Houins, Chief Executive Officer of the FASFC ; Patrick Genot, Manager of the FASFC Laboratory, Wandre

In 2012, the FASFC carried out 70.664 samplings (69.869 in 2011) and 172.767 analyses (167.804 in 2011). 82 % of the samples were analysed in the 5 FASFC laboratories, the others being assigned to 25 FASFC approved laboratories.

Results of analyses for all sectors

| | Samples | Analyses | Compliant |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Microbiological analyses | 27.449 | 62.170 | 95,5% |
| Hormones & Medicines | 23.952 | 59.808 | 98,5% |
| Residues & contaminants | 14.833 | 36.899 | 97,6% |
| Parasites | 3.732 | 4.402 | 93,7% |
| Quality | 2.109 | 4.553 | 97,9% |
| OGM | 407 | 407 | 98,8% |
| Other analyses | 3.895 | 4.528 | 97,9% |
| Total | 70.664 | 172.767 | 97,1% |

Not all of the controls carried out by the FASFC can be detailed in the context of this report. They are all included in the annual report, which is available on www.afsca.be. A few notable results subject to the following chapters.

3. Primary production

3.1. Inspections

Results of 6.794 missions in 5.477 farms (plant production)

| | Inspections | Favourable |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene | 3.746 | 97,8 % |
| Traceability (including identification and registration) | 3.739 | 97,9 % |
| Mandatory notification | 3.561 | 100 % |
| Physical phytosanitary checks | 3.368 | 94,0 % |
| Pesticides (possession and use) | 2.811 | 87,7 % |
| Self-checking systems | 20 | 95,0 % |

These results were comparable to those for 2011. Non-compliances resulted in 211 warnings, 210 fines and 259 seizures.

Most offences related to the retention of pesticides that are not or are no longer authorized: 798 kg, 137 litres and 1.248 packages of pesticides were seized.

Results of 8.174 missions in 7.275 livestock farms (animal production)

| | Inspections | favourable |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene on agricultural holdings, vehicles, merchants, assembly points and checkpoints | 6.744 | 98,1 % |
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene at semen (storage) centres and by embryo (production) teams | 197 | 100 % |
| Animal identification and recording | 5.037 | 93,2 % |
| Animal feedstuffs meets the requirements for the prevention of contamination by BSE | 888 | 99,8 % |
| Traceability (including identification and registration) at semen (storage) centres and by embryo (production) teams | 199 | 100 % |
| Compliance with prohibition of milk delivery | 157 | 99,4 % |
| Animal health | 1.571 | 97,7 % |
| Drugs and guidance | 3.970 | 97,3 % |
| Epidemiological surveillance | 3.540 | 97,7 % |
| Animal welfare | 4.756 | 96,3 % |
| Self-checking system | 204 | 97,5 % |
| Mandatory notification | 190 | 98,9 % |

Overall, the results were comparable to those for 2011. Non-compliances led to 643 warnings, 101 fines and 19 seizures (medicinal products, animals, 20 kg poultry, 168 litres of milk and dairy products).

Several herds or animals were impounded until the problems had been resolved

3.2. Phytosanitary controls

In 2012, the FASFC carried out 15.579 analyses of plants, plant products, soil and other materials that could constitute a support for harmful organisms; 96,1% of the samples were compliant (97,7% in 2011 and 93,9% in 2010). Non-compliant results were mainly due to fire blight, the adverse weather conditions we experienced in 2012 and the new checks for *Drosophila suzuki* (*Drosophila* of cherry) which allowed their detection in different places.

These samples were taken at producers, warehouses, dispatch centres, public green spaces and woods. This monitoring helps ensure, at the international level, that our plants and plants products comply with the legal requirements. A large number of the sample taking, mainly for the cultivation of seed potatoes, was delegated by the FASFC to the Regions. These samplings are also included in the previews below.

3.3. Animal Health

Belgium is officially free of several bovine and porcine diseases: bovine leukaemia (from 1/7/1999), brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis (from 25/6/2003) and Aujeszky's disease (from 4/10/2011). On 15/2/2012, Belgium was once again able to declare itself free of bluetongue disease.

Maintaining an officially free status for several consecutive years has served to ease the cattle-monitoring program since December 2009. Belgium is also free of many other diseases, including foot and mouth disease, rabies, highly pathogenic avian influenza (the last case was in 2003), Newcastle disease in poultry... The complete list is available on the website of the FASFC. Being free of these diseases is important for Belgium in the context of intra-community trade and export to third countries.

BSE Tests: the end of a special period for the FASFC and sectors

On May 22, 2012, at the General Assembly of the OIE Belgium officially received the most favourable EU status of being a "negligible risk for BSE". This achievement will greatly facilitate trade in live cattle, beef and other bovine products with third countries.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease is a transmissible disease in cattle that affects the brain and always leads to the death of the animal. The BSE epidemic began in 1986 in the United Kingdom and then spread. In 1997, the first case of BSE was found in Belgium; an official BSE monitoring programme was therefore launched: and all clinically suspect cattle were subject to a mandatory review.

Since 1998, the removal of specified risk materials (SRM) at the slaughterhouse also became mandatory for carcasses of bovine animals intended for human consumption. This included the removal of the brain and spinal cord to protect public health. Since 1994 too, it has been forbidden to feed cattle with animal proteins in order to prevent the spread of the disease via feed (feed ban). The ban on using animal proteins in animal feed was generalized to all farmed animals in 2001.

On 1/1/2001, a large-scale monitoring system was set up under pressure from the European Union: healthy slaughtered cattle and cattle cadavers must be subject to a rapid BSE test. Thanks to this extensive monitoring programme, 133 cattle that tested positive for BSE were excluded from the food chain between 2001 and 2006.

Between 1/1/2001 and 31/12/2012, the network of approved laboratories conducted near 3.900.000 rapid BSE tests. Implementation of this program has not only required special logistical efforts, but has also led to significant expenditure: over 210 million euros, of which 22 million were paid for by the cattle industry via payments at the slaughterhouse, while another part was recovered from all food chain operators via their annual contributions.

The last two positive cases date back to 2006. Thanks to this remarkable achievement, and the precautionary measures put in place (feed ban and SRM removal) the Belgian case was rated favourably by a group of international experts and obtained the status «negligible risk».

Abortion screening

Essential in our strategy for combating animal diseases is monitoring cases of miscarriage in cattle, sheep or goats: in addition to the mandatory detection of brucellosis, many other pathogens are analysed (serological analyses of the mother and virological and bacteriological analyses of the foetus or placenta).

In 2012, 11.324 abortions in cattle were subjected to analysis. This is a sharp increase from 2010 (6.677) and 2011 (8.164.). This increase was due to the emergence of the Schmallenberg virus in 2012, as well as the FASFC funding analyses carried out in the context of the miscarriage policy and organising the transport of the material for analysis.

The following agents were detected : Schmallenberg virus , neosporosis, leptospirosis, yeasts and moulds, Arcanobacterium pyogenes, Toxoplasma, Chlamydia, E. coli, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, Campylobacter, bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), Q-fever and one case of bovine brucellosis.

4. Phytopharmaceutical products

In 2012, the FASFC took 3.569 samples of fruits, vegetables and cereals and examined them for more than 500 different pesticide residues; 96,4% of the results were compliant (absence of residues) or did not exceed the maximum residue limits in the legislation, which was comparable to previous years. Fruit and vegetables imported from third countries have shown a proportionally higher level of MRL (maximum residue limits) exceedances (5,7%) than those produced in Belgium (1,5%) and other Member States of the EU (0,9%).

Four samples (basil, celery, pineapple and eggplant) exceeding the MRLs posed a possible risk to the consumer and were therefore withdrawn from the market.

In the context of enhanced controls (Regulation 669/2009), non-compliant batches mainly involved tea from China. Non-compliances resulted in 10 fines and 8 seizures. Additional measures (inspection, further analyses and possibly seizures) have also been taken against those responsible for non-compliant foodstuffs (producers or importers).

5. Animal feed

As in previous years, the results of inspections carried out in 2012 confirmed the excellent outcomes of inspections in the field of animal feed: 94% of controls on infrastructure, self-checking, hygiene, traceability, packaging, labelling and mandatory

notifications, as well as 99% of inspections for compliance with the requirements for medicated feedstuffs were favourable.

6. Antibiotic resistance

The Belgian authorities, research centres in general and the Scientific Committee of the FASFC in particular, have devoted a great deal of attention to antimicrobial resistance. The situation is closely followed through monitoring (analysis of meat and live animals), and concrete measures are taken and prepared for the rational use of antibiotics in the animal sector. The aim is to reduce resistance and thus avoid them becoming a danger to public health.

Since 2011, the FASFC has carried out monitoring of antibiotic resistance to pathogens and indicator bacteria in calves, pigs and poultry, including ESBL (extended spectrum beta-lactamase) producing bacteria in poultry. This monitoring program was in advance of a European decision. As of 2014, this decision will require all Member States to implement a surveillance programme of antimicrobial resistance including amongst others, Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli in poultry, pigs and cattle. In this way, the European Commission will have an overview of the situation across Europe

The level of E. coli ESBL producers increased from 82% in 2011 to 53% in 2012.

With regard to MRSA (Staphylococcus Aureus Methicillin-Resistant), the FASFC has targeted a different animal species each year (cattle in 2011, poultry in 2012 and pigs in 2013). In 2012, the MRSA level was 10,7% in cattle and 48% in calves.



Since 2012, AMCRA (Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animal), an initiative of all stakeholders in the sector, has been supported and funded by the FASFC and the FAMHP. This centre of expertise carries out activities to raise the awareness of veterinarians and farmers, providing them with an overview of the current situation and prepares guidelines for the responsible use of antibiotics.

AMCRA also provides advice on reducing the use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine by implementing preventive measures such as vaccination, improved nutrition, good hygiene and biosecurity...

7. Slaughter

All cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses must be subject to an examination before and after slaughter: inspection. The primary objective of this inspection is to ensure public health is protected by excluding meat which present anomalies, which is contaminated by pathogens or contains residues of veterinary medicinal products or contaminants from human consumption. Inspections are carried out by an official veterinarian, usually an independent veterinarian who manages the task on behalf of the Agency.

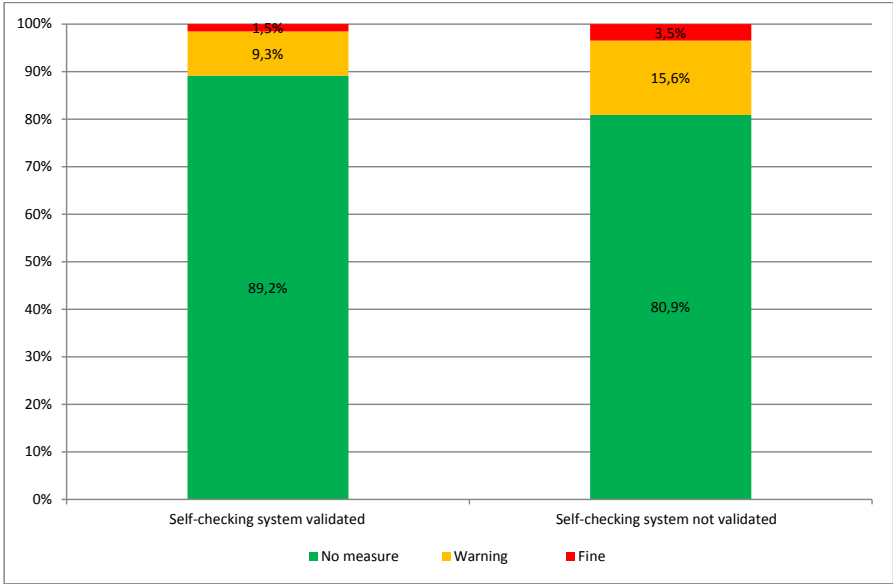
| | Carcasses inspected | Carcasses seized |
|---------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Cattle | 512.088 | 1.731 (0,3 %) |
| Calves | 312.423 | 323 (0,1 %) |
| Pigs | 11.724.297 | 29.265 (0,2 %) |
| Horses | 9.199 | 51 (0,5 %) |
| Sheep | 116.231 | 97 (0,1 %) |
| Goats | 7.553 | 20 (0,3 %) |
| Poultry | 313.094.063 | 3.934.999 (1,26 %) |
| Rabbits | 2.993.525 | 35.649 (1,2 %) |

In addition to the inspections themselves, the official veterinarian also conducts inspections related to information about the food chain, animal welfare, (measures against mad cow disease) specified risk materials and other by-products, about laboratory tests, hygiene, infrastructure and self-regulation.

In 2012, 7.827 inspections were conducted by FASFC agents at 115 abattoirs on all animal species. 98,0% of the inspections related to animal welfare, mandatory notifications, traceability, identification and registration, and waste management were compliant. For the self-regulation system, 85,3% of the controls were compliant, as were 80,3% of the controls on infrastructure and hygiene.

8. Food processing

Results of visits to establishments using or not using a validated self-checking system:
processing



In 2012, 3.385 visits were conducted at 2.658 operators in establishments for processing food of animal origin (meat, fish products ...) and plant origin (fruits, vegetables, etc...).

Non-compliances gave rise to 484 warnings, 104 fines, 2 temporary closures, 8 procedures for suspension or withdrawal of authorisation and 16 seizures (mainly fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry, herbs and spices). An improvement in the results of controls related to self-checking systems was observed in comparison to 2011.

Results of inspections in the food processing sector

| | Inspections | Favourable |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Infrastructure, installation and hygiene | 5.721 | 90,5 % |
| Self-checking system | 2.291 | 87,7 % |
| Mandatory notification | 1.999 | 99,4 % |
| Traceability | 2.377 | 97,8 % |
| Labelling | 2.835 | 95,8 % |
| Transport | 1.398 | 97,9 % |
| Waste management | 1.232 | 96,8 % |

9. Distribution

9.1. Preventative actions

Training alternative to administrative fines

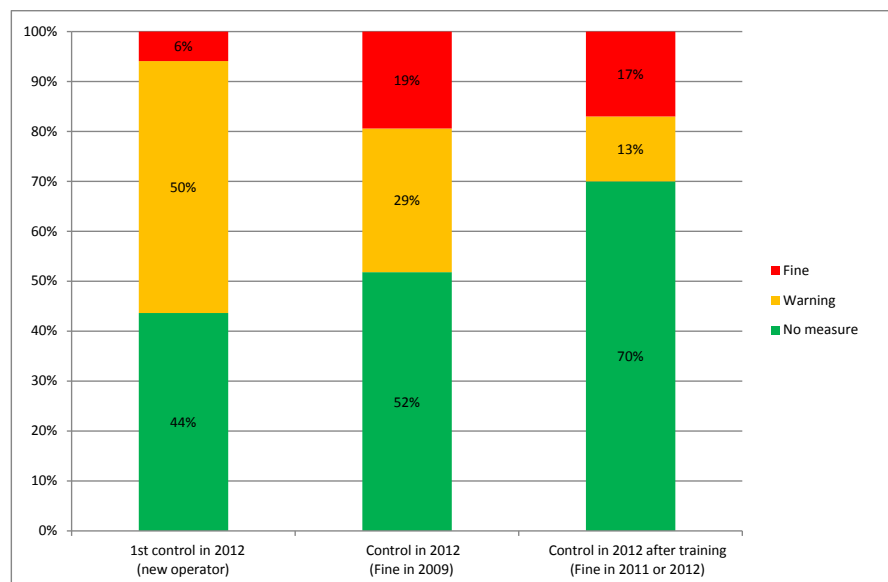
THE FASFC aims to improve the level of hygiene when necessary by focussing on positive actions rather than immediate sanctions. This is reflected in the histogram below, where during the first control of a new restaurant, warnings are preferred over a PV.

In collaboration with the HORECA federations, and since 1/1/2011, the FASFC have offered operators in the HORECA sector (restaurants, pita bars, chip shops, snack-bars...) the possibility of suspending an administrative fine if they and their staff attend training organized by the popularization units of the FASFC. This action is applicable only to the first fine, and is not applicable for smoking ban offences.

This initiative was added to the “FASFC-smiley”, a consumer indicator which shows those operators whose self-checking system has been certified. In 2012, 1.170 participants attended 56 training sessions for nominally fined restaurateurs.

The evaluation of this action after 2 years is very positive: subsequent controls were favourable for 70% of establishments with training, compared with only 52% of establishments who had not received training.

Impact of training alternative to administrative fines



Announced control actions

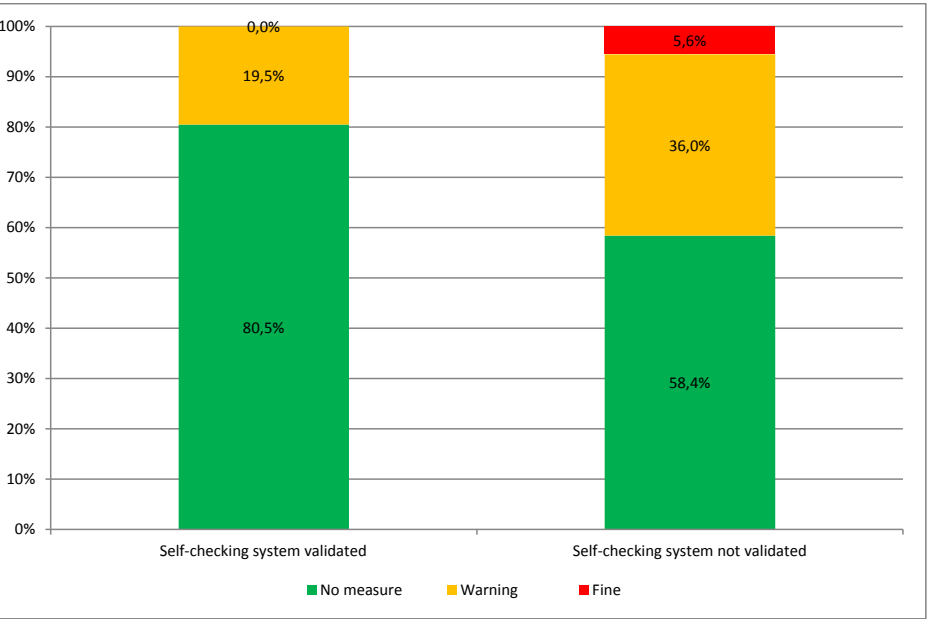
To improve hygiene in the distribution sector, the FASFC organizes activities to raise the awareness and to inform professionals, which - since 2009 – have involved announced controls in some cities, which have been preceded by information sessions. These are held annually in ten cities all over the country and target operators in the B2C-sectors: HORECA, butcher shops, grocery stores, bakeries, supermarkets and industrial kitchens and wholesalers.

In 2012, 78% of the 5.627 controls conducted in 2.114 institutions were favourable. The results of these actions were significantly better than those of non-advertised controls, particularly for infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (69% positive controls). Nevertheless, non-compliances mainly concerned the self-checking system and hygiene regulations. They resulted in 663 warnings, 89 fines and 3 temporary closures.

THE FASFC organised 19 information sessions, attended by 1.126 staff participants. Institutions were controlled systematically. These campaigns received extensive media coverage and put food chain safety in the spotlight.

9.2. HORECA and industrial kitchens

Results of visits to establishments with and without a validated self-checking system : catering and industrial kitchens



Horeca

In 2012, the FASFC carried out 12.779 visits to 12.384 catering establishments

Overview of the most frequent serious non-compliances (check-list points) in non-itinerant HORECA

| | Number of inspections (non-compliant) |
|---|--|
| Surfaces in contact with foodstuffs were clean (including equipment and apparatus) | 9.977 (9,9 %) |
| Chilled food temperatures and the cold chain were respected | 9.755 (9,5 %) |
| Absence of spoiled food, with a exceeded expiry date or that were unfit for human consumption | 9.912 (8,3 %) |
| Thawing was performed under appropriate conditions | 6.885 (8,2 %) |
| Good hygiene of the staff who wore appropriate and clean clothing | 9.833 (7,1 %) |

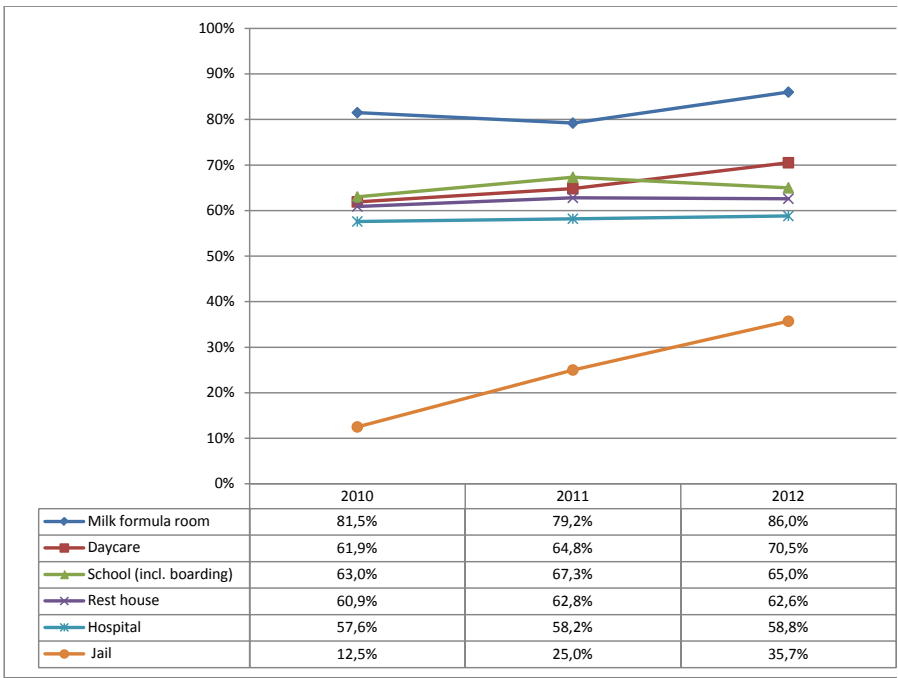
The results of inspections of infrastructure, installations and hygiene in restaurants and cafes, as well as the results of inspections of self-checking systems and mandatory notifications were better than in 2011.

Non-compliant results gave rise to 5.105 warnings, 19 actions against another operator, 1.389 fines, 37 temporary closures, one procedure for suspension or withdrawal of authorisation and 222 seizures (more than 1.5 tonnes of meat, about 1,5 tonnes of fishery products, more than one tonne of fruit and vegetables and more than 9,5 tonnes of other products).

Industrial kitchens

THE FASFC also carried out 4.253 visits to 4.223 industrial kitchens.

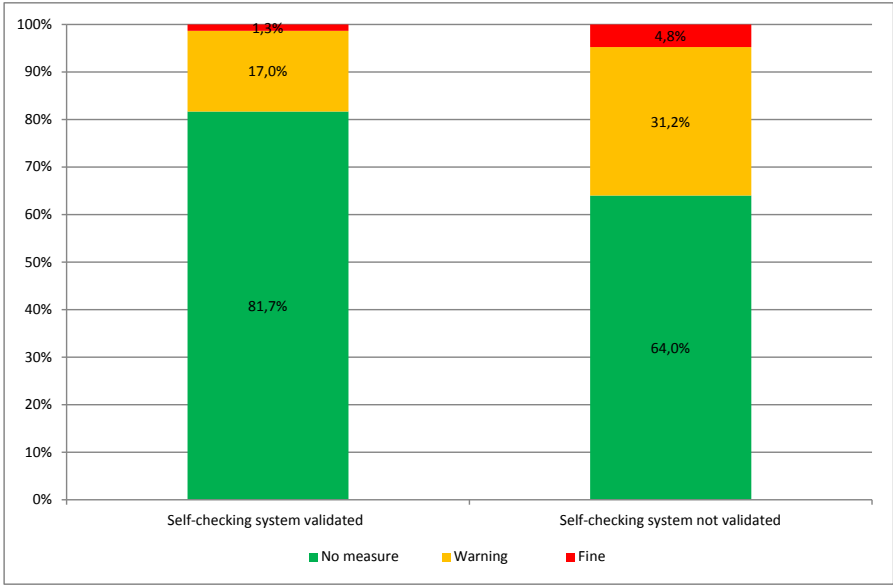
Inspections of the infrastructure, installations and hygiene in industrial kitchens: a few specific activities (compliant and compliant results with comments)



Non-compliant results gave rise to 1.597 warnings, 15 actions against another operator, 65 fines and 25 seizures (more than 100 kg of fish, 78 kg of prepared meals, 35 kg of meat and more than 700 kg of other products).

9.3. Wholesalers and retailers

Results of visits to establishments with or without a valid self-checking system: retailers and wholesalers



Retailers

In 2012, the FASFC carried out 10.093 missions to 9,803 retailers. 77,7 % of the inspections were favourable.

Top 3 major non-compliances: number of inspections (non-compliance results)

| | Retail business (without processing) | Retail business (with processing) | Retail business, bread and pastries | Meat retailers, butcheries | Fish retailers, fishmongers |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Temperatures for chilled food and the cold chain were respected | 2.409 (10,9 %) | 1.006 (15,5 %) | 1.386 (14,4 %) | | 236 (5,9 %) |
| The surfaces in contact with foodstuffs were clean (including equipment and apparatus) | | 1.063 (5,6 %) | 1.407 (13,6 %) | 2.287 (11,8 %) | 231 (6,1 %) |
| Good hygiene of the staff who wear appropriate and clean clothing | | | 1.405 (7,5 %) | | |
| Absence of spoiled food, with an exceeded expiry date or that were unfit for human consumption | 3.732 (5,7 %) | 1.076 (11,1 %) | | 2.275 (7,4 %) | 237 (6,3 %) |
| Mandatory annual analysis of a sample of minced meat or minced meat preparation has been made and followed up correctly | | | | 2.138 (23,6 %) | |
| The temperatures of frozen products were respected | 2.219 (4,1 %) | | | | |

Wholesalers

In 2012, the FASFC carried out 774 missions at 762 wholesalers; 90,6 % of the inspections were favourable.

| | Inspections | Favourable |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene | 723 | 87,4 % |
| Self-checking system | 323 | 83,9 % |
| Mandatory notification | 437 | 98,9 % |
| Traceability | 426 | 92,5 % |

The results of inspections of infrastruc-
ture, installation, hygiene, self-checking
systems and mandatory notifications for
wholesalers were better than those for
2011 (respectively 20,9 %, 18,8 % and 4,3 %
non-compliant results).

Non-compliant results gave rise to 127
warnings, 21 fines and the seizure of more
than half a ton of products (6 seizures).

10. Food-borne outbreaks

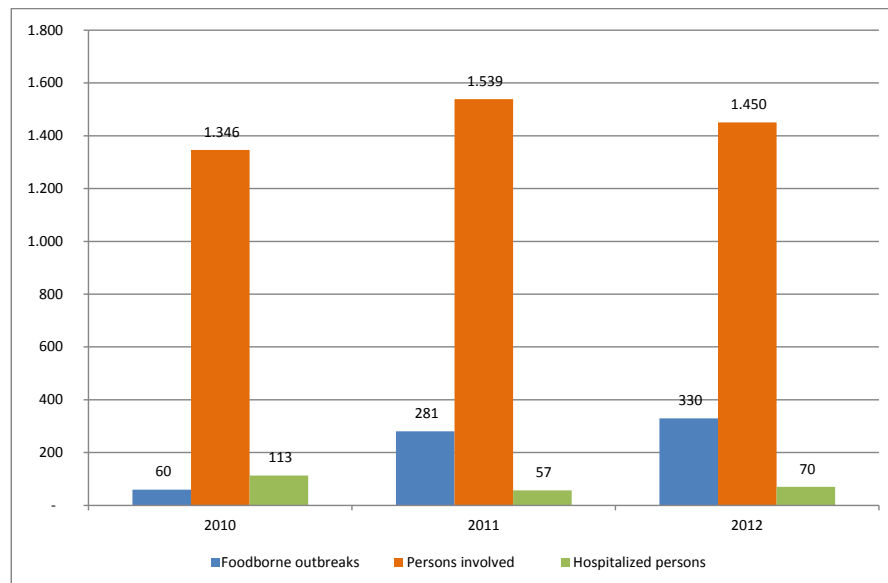
Food-borne outbreaks are infections or intoxications caused by the consumption of microbiologically contaminated food or water. It becomes a case of collective food poisoning when, in the same circum-

stances, 2 or more people present similar symptoms and that there is a (probable) causal relationship with the same food source.

The cause of a foodborne outbreak was identified in only 10 % of the cases by analysis of food remnants or examination of the sick person. The main causes of foodborne outbreaks in 2012 were:

- DSP in molluscs (mussels): 2 cases having caused 110 illnesses,
- Norovirus (unknown origin): 9 incidents caused 98 illnesses and 4 hospitalisations,
- Listeria monocytogenes in dairy products: 1 case having caused illness in 16 people, hospitalisation of 7 people including 1 who died,
- E. coli O157 (American fillet): 5 cases having caused 57 illnesses and 23 hospitalisations,
- Salmonella (poultry meat): 5 cases having caused 41 illnesses and 3 hospitalisations.

Number of notified foodborne outbreaks



11. Import controls

Import controls

| | 2011 : shipped | 2011: shipments refused | 2012 : shipped | 2012 : shipments refused |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Live animals | 2.724 | 42 (1,5 %) | 2.993 | 26 (0,9 %) |
| Reproductive material | 55 | 4 (7,3 %) | 105 | 6 (5,7 %) |
| Animal products for human consumption | 26.719 | 185 (0,7 %) | 25.603 | 188 (0,7 %) |
| Food of non-animal origin | 5.435 | 31 (0,6 %) | 4.241 | 26 (0,6 %) |
| Materials in contact with foodstuffs | 50 | - | 95 | 3 (3,2 %) |
| Products not for human consumption | 5.268 | 20 (1 %) | 5.478 | 57 (1 %) |
| Plants, plant products | 17.403 | 48 (0,3 %) | 18.944 | 68 (0,4 %) |
| Total | 57.654 | 330 (0,6 %) | 57.459 | 374 (0,7 %) |

Of meat and meat products (25.603 shipment controls, 1.303 analyses), 188 shipments were rejected because of the presence of veterinary drug residues (nitrofurans in shrimp from India, chloramphenicol in rabbit meat from China...), Salmonella (frogs legs from Indonesia, meat from Brazil, shellfish meat from Vietnam), VTEC (meat from Argentina), etc.

At the European level, there has been a harmonised approach to controls on food imports from third countries: the checks have been strengthened. In this context, the FASFC checked 2.295 shipments and carried out 662 analyses. 26 shipments were rejected due to the presence of pes-

ticides (Chinese tea, pepper from Egypt, Basil from Thailand...), mycotoxins (peanuts from Brazil, pistachios from Turkey & Iran...), banned colorants (spices and palm oil) and GMO (rice from China).

12. RASFF

In 2012, 3.516 messages (3.723 in 2011) were reported through the European system of rapid alerts (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed RASFF) for products that could pose a risk to humans or animals: 143 RASFF (128 in 2011) came from Belgium following information from a facility's self-checking system (43), an official control on the Belgian market (42), an analysis during the importation of a product (48), a complaint from a consumer (4), food poisoning (4) or official check on the market of a third country (2).

A few examples of products that have been the subject of a RASFF:

- Salmonella in raw milk (Belgium),
- E. coli O157 in ground beef (Belgium),
- Histamine in tuna from Indonesia and Vietnam,
- Clenbuterol & phenylbutazone (banned drugs) in horsemeat from Canada.

13. Fighting fraud

In the context of the fight against fraud for safety of the food chain, the National Investigations Unit of the FASFC (NOE/UNE) carries out investigations into the illegal use of growth promoters, participates in roadside checks at the request of the police, organizes actions on certain topics (checks at horse races, at horse merchants, identification of the horses, pesticides, internet sales of food supplements, veterinary medicinal products...).

It collaborates actively with various Belgian authorities - including the police and drug agency - as well as international bodies.

It participates in the working groups for:

- the Multidisciplinary Hormone Unit (MHU)
- the Interdepartmental Commission for Coordination of Fraud Control in economic sectors (ICCF)
- the Interdepartmental Coordination Unit for Food Safety Inspection (ICVV)
- the Multidisciplinary Fraud Control Unit for safety of the food chain (MFVV), which is chaired by the FASFC.

| Fighting fraud | | | |
|---|------|------|------|
| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Fraud investigations | 237 | 271 | 245 |
| Participation in roadside checks | 27 | 49 | 37 |
| Specific actions (food supplements, horses ...) | 17 | 32 | 30 |
| Transfer of information to other services | 200 | 222 | 96 |
| Offences | 187 | 240 | 221 |

Passenger checks at Customs

In collaboration with Customs, the Federal Agency for Drugs and Health Products] (FAMHP) and the SPF Public Health, the FASFC conducted checks at Brussels National (Zaventem) airport on passenger's baggage from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe (non-EU), in order to monitor compliance with regulations regarding the importation of meat, plants and animals, including protected species, which are particularly important rules for public health. Checks have also targeted the illegal importation of cosmetic products and medicines.

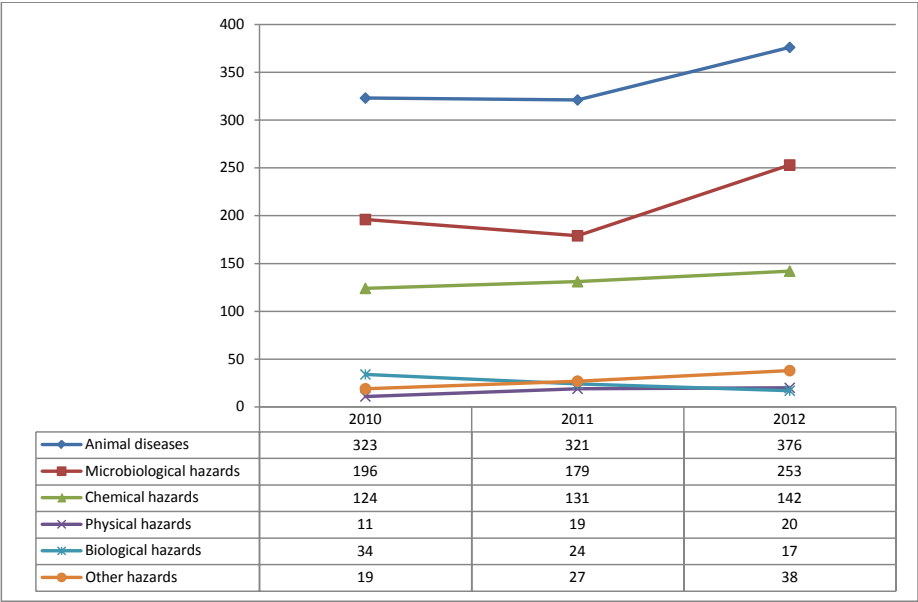


Large quantities of products were seized, including 465 kg of fish, dairy products, eggs, meat (goat, agouti, antelope, monkey, sausages, poultry...), prohibited fruit (lemongrass, mandarin oranges with leaves, fruit without certificates) and 5 pets whose documents were not in order.

14. Obligatory notification

Any operator carrying on business activities which fall within the remit of the FASFC must inform them immediately when they consider or have reason to believe that a product that they have imported, pro-

duced, grown, raised, processed, manufactured, distributed or placed on the market could be detrimental to human, animal or plant health (Royal Decree of 14 November 2003).



The number of notifications increased by 27 % when compared to 2011. Apart from animal diseases (376), the main reasons for notification were the presence of Salmonella (161 or + 35 %), residues of

veterinary drugs (53 or + 29 %), Listeria monocytogenes (50 or + 25 %), pesticide residues (44 or + 69 %) and diseases of plants and pests (16 as in 2011).

15. Sanctions

| Consequences of non-compliances | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Warnings | 13.431 | 14.892 | 13.952 |
| PV | 4.448 | 4.078 | 4.387 |
| Seizures | 936 | 1.477 | 1.601 |
| Temporary closures | 154 | 172 | 123 |
| Withdrawal/refusal of approval or authorisation | 11 | 13 | 14 |
| Administrative fines | 2.248.103 € | 2.462.022 € | 2.793.707 € |

Seizures amounted to 772 tonnes of products, including 213 tonnes of animal feed, 191 tonnes of meat and meat products, 139 tonnes of various food commodities,

135 tons of cereals and cereal products, 71 tonnes of fruit and vegetables, 11 tonnes of fish products, 5 tonnes of milk and dairy products and 7 tonnes of pesticides.

Food safety
barometers

4

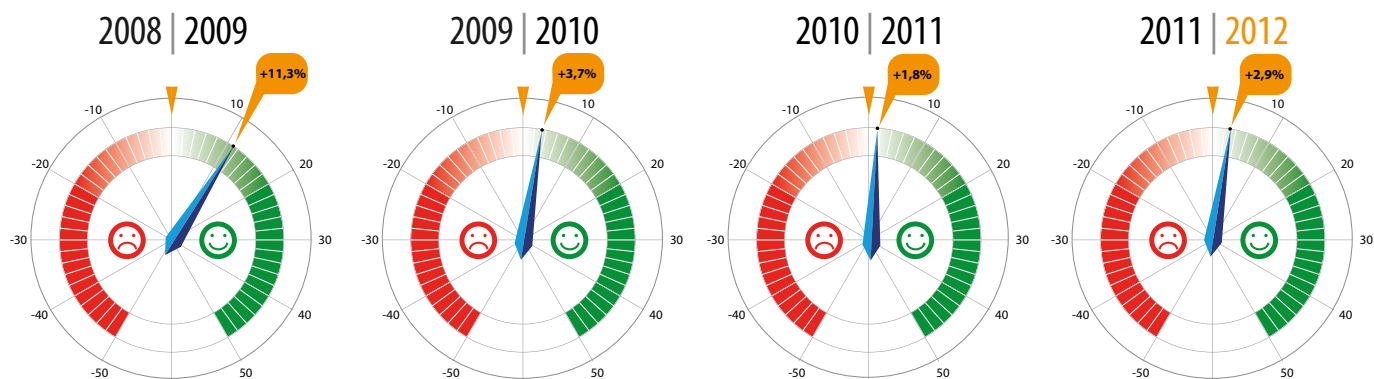
In order to obtain a general overview of the safety of the food chain, in collaboration with the Agency, the Scientific Committee of the FASFC has developed a barometer of the safety of the food chain, which includes food safety, animal health and plant health (phytosanitary status). This measurement instrument allows objective annual monitoring of the safety of the food chain and therefore clear communication as well.

Expressed in the form of a comparison to the previous year, the animal health barometer measures the general health status of the Belgian animal population. The plant health barometer measures the overall phytosanitary status of plants and plant products in Belgium.

These barometers are based on indicators, calculated on the basis of carefully chosen measurable parameters, and for most of these, on the results of the FASFC control program. Given the variability of the impact these indicators have on food chain safety, their relative importance is weighted.

The results of the various barometers are available on the website of the FASFC. They must be interpreted with caution, because annual fluctuations can have several causes. In the longer term, the barometers are particularly suited for detecting general trends in the safety of the food chain.

In general, the results show a high level of food safety in our country.

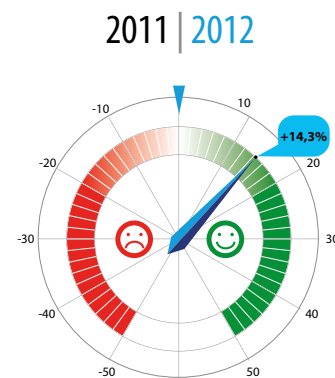


This positive trend in the **food safety barometer** has resulted mainly from an increase in the number of validated self-checking systems in the area of food processing, an improvement in the results of inspection on self-regulation systems in primary production, processing and distribution, as well as the results of infrastructure-, equipment- and hygiene inspections at HORECA, canteens, wholesalers and retailers.

In 2012, a large number of notifications relating to food safety were recorded. This indicates a greater awareness amongst operators and professionals who find

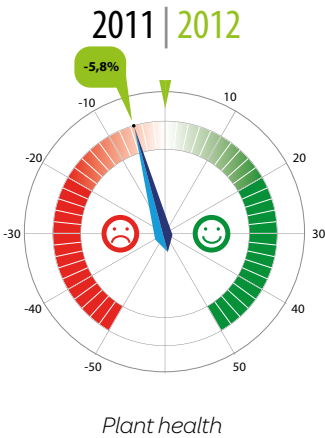
products that do not meet food safety requirements. The results of the controls on products were, as was the case in previous years, highly favourable.

In comparison to 2011, 2012 was marked by a remarkable increase of +14.3 % in the **barometer of animal health**. This positive progress was mainly due to improved vigilance with regard to notifiable animal diseases and miscarriages in cattle, an improvement in self-checking systems in animal production, and a decrease in mortality in slaughter pigs.



Animal health

In 2012, the **barometer of plant health** (phytosanitary status) decreased by 5.8%. The cause was mainly the decrease in the number of notifications of diseases of plants and pests received by the FASFC, the increase in the number of regulated pests and a reduction in the rate of compliance of phytosanitary controls on importation. In contrast, a positive trend in the percentage of compliant results for pospiviroids was observed.



The FASFC
at your service

5

Central services










- CA Botanique - Food Safety Centre
Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 55, 1000 Brussels
T 02/211 82 11 – F 02/211 82 00 – www.afsca.be
- 1 Point of contact for consumers: 0800 13 550
pointdecontact@afsca.be
Information service: vulgaris@afsca.be
Mediation service: servicemediation@afsca.be



Provincial Control Units

- PCU Antwerp
2 Italielei 124 bus 92, 2000 Antwerp
T 03/202 27 11 – F 03/202 28 11
Info.ANT@favv.be
- PCU Brussels
3 CA Botanique - Food Safety Centre
Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 55, 1000 Brussels
T 02/211 92 00 – F 02/211 91 80 – Info.BRU@afsca.be
- PCU Hainaut
4 Avenue Thomas Edison 3, 7000 Mons
T 065/40 62 11 – F 065/40 62 10
Info.HAI@afsca.be
- PCU Limburg
5 Kempische Steenweg 297 bus 4, 3500 Hasselt
T 011/26 39 84 – F 011/26 39 85
Info.LIM@favv.be
- PCU Liège
6 Boulevard Frere-Orban 25, 4000 Liège
T 04/224 59 11 – F 04/224 59 01
Info.LIE@afsca.be
- PCU Luxembourg
7 Rue du Vicinal 1 – 2nd etage, 6800 Libramont
T 061/21 00 60 – F 061/21 00 79
Info.LUX@afsca.be
- PCU Namur
8 Route de Hannut 40, 5004 Bouge
T 081/20 62 00 – F 081/20 62 02
Info.NAM@afsca.be



| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| 9 | PCU East Flanders Zuiderpoort, Block B, 10 th etage Gaston Crommenlaan 6/1000, 9050 Ghent T 09/210 13 00 – F 09/210 13 20 – Info.OVL@favv.be |  |
| 10 | PCU Flemish Brabant Greenhill campus, Interleuvenlaan 15 – Block E, Researchpark Haasrode 1515, 3001 Leuven T 016/39 01 11 – F 016/39 01 05 – Info.VBR@favv.be |  |
| 11 | PCU Walloon Brabant Espace Coeur de Ville 1, 2 nd etage, 1340 Ottignies T 010/42 13 40 – F 010/42 13 80 Info.BRW@afsca.be |  |
| 12 | PCU West Flanders Koning Albert I laan 122, 8200 Brugge T 050/30 37 10 – F 050/30 37 12 Info.WVL@favv.be |  |
| FASFC Laboratories | | |
| 13 | Gembloux Chaussee de Namur 22, 5030 Gembloux T 081/62 03 00 – F 081/62 03 01 |  |
| 14 | Gentbrugge Braemkasteelstraat 59, 9050 Gentbrugge T 09/210 21 00 – F 09/210 21 01 |  |
| 15 | Liège Rue de Vise 495, 4020 Wandre T 04/252 01 58 – F 04/252 22 96 |  |
| 16 | Melle Brusselsesteenweg 370a, 9090 Melle T 09/272 31 00 – F 09/272 31 01 |  |
| 17 | Tervuren Leuvensesteenweg 17, 3080 Tervuren T 02/769 23 11 – F 02/769 23 30 |  |



Federal Agency for Safety of the Food Chain

CA-Botanique • Food Safety Center

Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 55 • 1000 Brussels

☎ 02/211 82 11 • 📠 02/211 82 00

www.afsca.be

