



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

**Responsible publisher**

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## Foreword

Dear reader,

The FASFC activity report always provides an opportunity to look back, evaluate and draw conclusions for the future. For Gil Houins, who left the Agency on the 1st of May 2014, 2013 marked the culmination of a splendid career. Since June 2006, he had competently led the Agency with great enthusiasm. Let us take the opportunity to emphasize that the Agency's success is not only the result of good leadership but also of the tireless efforts of its employees and all of the partners that carry out missions for the FASFC.

The results for 2013 are to be reckoned with. Not only does the FASFC continue to increase its activities year after year, but the inspection results in a number of sectors have also improved. Worthy of note are the improved results in the distribution sector, more precisely in the trade of phytopharmaceuticals, in the slaughterhouses, in the hotel and catering business and in the

majority of institutional kitchens. Hopefully, this will be the turning point towards a sustainable improvement. Often, this is not only the result of the FASFC's supervision, but also of other initiatives taken by the Agency and the sectors. A lot of efforts are being made to advise and instruct companies and to support their endeavours.

This is also reflected in the improvement of the barometers for the safety of the food chain. These barometers were developed to be able to provide a state of play at a glance! In the past, we always compared the current year with the previous one. Nowadays, we have sufficient information to identify trends. The food safety barometer, just like the animal health barometer, clearly indicates a positive trend. For the plant health barometer, the evolution is less marked. Together with the Scientific Committee, we will verify how we can even further fine-tune and improve these instruments.

This, however, does not mean that all of our objectives were attained. In several sectors, there is still room for improvement. There are still regulations that could be more efficient and could do with further simplification. As a government institution we have to be responsive to societal evolutions, such as the demand for more transparency concerning our inspection results or the search for alternative protein sources, such as insects.

There is still a lot of work to do, but we can look to the future with confidence, as long as the FASFC can retain its strong position.

**Herman Diricks**

Chief Executive Officer

# Table of contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>The FASFC at the service of food safety</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Our resources	7
2.	Core process of the FASFC	9
3.	A professional and self-demanding organization	12
4.	International relations	14
<b>2.</b>	<b>The FASFC at the service of consumers and professionals</b>	<b>17</b>
1.	Transparency	19
2.	Training and support for professionals	20
3.	At the service of consumers and professionals	22
4.	Consultation	26
5.	Self-checking systems and sector guides	26
<b>3.</b>	<b>Our core mission: inspections</b>	<b>29</b>
1.	Primary production	34
2.	Antibiotic resistance	40
3.	Slaughter	40
4.	Food processing	42
5.	Hotel and catering businesses and institutional kitchens	46
6.	Retail and wholesale traders	49
7.	Food-borne outbreaks	51
8.	Import controls	52
9.	Fighting fraud	55
10.	Mandatory notification	57
11.	Sanctions	58
<b>4.</b>	<b>Food chain safety barometers</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>The FASFC at your service</b>	<b>65</b>



1

The FASFC  
at the service  
of food safety

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## Safe food day after day: our job!

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 FASFC integrates all control services, that are competent for the entire food chain. Not only does it control foodstuffs, feeding stuffs, fertilizers and crop protection products, but it is also responsible for animal disease prevention and control and phytosanitary aspects (plant sector). Drawing up the operational procedures for controls, certification and the infrastructure standards companies active in the food chain have to comply with, is also a part

of its mission. The FASFC also manages all communications with the operators and in particular consumer information.

## 1. Our resources

To fulfil its missions in 2013, the FASFC relied on the following resources:

- 1,320 collaborators;
- 11 provincial control units (PCUs) accredited according to ISO 17020 with a total of 725 collaborators;
- 686 independent veterinarians on assignment, representing some 390 FTE, who carry out control assignments (mainly ante- and post-mortem inspections in slaughter houses, inspections regarding animal welfare) and certification assignments under the supervision of officials. When veterinarians on assignment carry out assignments on behalf of the FASFC their status is equal to that of official veterinarians;
- a service that carries out coordinated fraud control actions (National Inquiry Unit NIU);
- a close collaboration with various federal and regional public services, including police and customs;
- 5 internal laboratories accredited according to ISO 17025, employing 152 staff;
- a network of 52 external laboratories approved by the FASFC, and 9 national reference laboratories;
- a budget of €180.9 million.

### Company Discovery Day

The laboratory of Liège (Wandre), the PCUs of Namur and Flemish-Brabant participated in the Company Discovery Day on the first Sunday of October. This open day was a unique opportunity for the staff to showcase its work to the general public.



## Our budget

	Realizations 2011	Realizations 2012	Realizations 2013
Public funding	107.993.000 € (57,5 %)	106.147.000 € (57,7 %)	106.820.000 € (57,7 %)
Contributions	30.084.000 € (16,0 %)	29.957.000 € (16,3 %)	30.676.000 € (16,6 %)
Fees	40.215.000 € (21,4 %)	37.422.000 € (20,4 %)	40.451.000 € (21,8 %)
Financial support from the European Union	3.362.000 € (1,8 %)	2.990.000 € (1,6 %)	-144.000 €* (-0,1 %)
Miscellaneous	6.086.000 € (3,2 %)	7.415.000 € (4,0 %)	7.475.000 € (4,0 %)
Total revenue	187.740.000 €	183.931.000 €	185.278.000 €

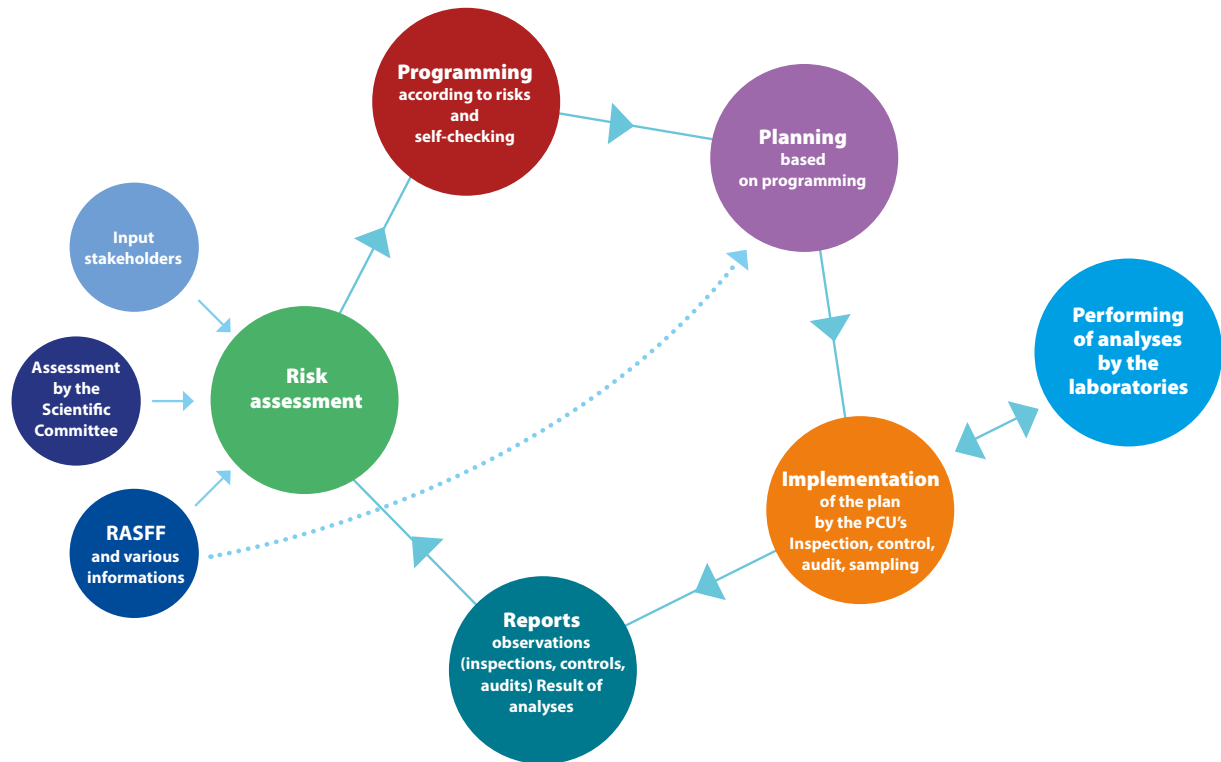
\* Negative amount due to an accounting correction (real intervention by the EU: 1.308.088 €)

## FASFC expenditure

	Realizations 2011	Realizations 2012	Realizations 2013
Personnel costs	51,7%	55,8%	55,8%
Salaries	81.188.000 €	85.390.000 €	84.846.000 €
Other personnel costs	7.260.000 €	6.445.000 €	7.772.000 €
Operating costs	47,0%	42,9%	42,1%
Personnel and operating costs	8.221.000 €	7.695.000 €	7.693.000 €
ICT	7.351.000 €	7.268.000 €	7.463.000 €
Missions performed by veterinarians on assignment	27.744.000 €	26.886.000 €	27.657.000 €
External laboratories	20.168.000 €	19.910.000 €	19.493.000 €
Refunding 2005 advance payments to the National Treasury (BSE related costs)	6.715.000 €	0 €	0 €
Other operating costs	10.213.000 €	8.922.000 €	7.704.000 €
Investments	1,3%	1,3%	2,1%
Equipment, furniture, ICT	2.221.000 €	2.060.000 €	3.507.000 €
Total expenditure	171.081.000 €	164.576.000 €	166.135.000 €



## 2. Core process of the FASFC



The FASFC ensures that operators involved in the food chain meet the regulatory requirements. In order to check the safety and 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;
- carries out product controls (analyses and label controls).

The common thread throughout our controls is: respect, objectivity ("Charte du contrôleur" – charter of control officers) and a constant aim to improve our working methods and to increase our efficiency by means of training.

## Multi-annual planning: the MANCP

The Food Agency is responsible for drawing up an integrated multi-annual national control plan (MANCP), as required by European Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004. This plan contains information on the strategy and organizational set up in order to guarantee the effective control of the entire food chain. When drawing up the plan, the Agency focuses on the following targets: a high level of food safety and an efficient use of available staff.

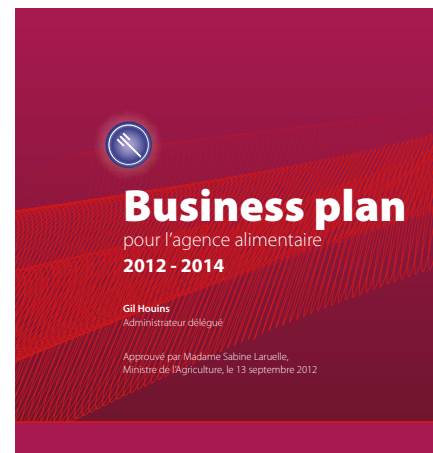
In addition to the FASFC, several other authorities are involved in implementing the plan, i.e. the Federal Public Service (FPS) Public Health, the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP), the Multidisciplinary Hormones Unit, the Federal Nuclear Safety Agency (AFCN/FANC), the Customs and Excise Authority, the regional authorities and the FPS Economy as well as some other external inspection bodies.

The strategic and operational objectives and also the validity period of the MANCP follow those set forth in the business plan

of the FASFC's CEO. The adjustments to the MANCP and the results of the controls are communicated annually to the European Commission. The activity report of the FASFC forms the basis for the MANCP. The MANCP is available on our website. <http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/about/mancp>

## Business Plan

The business plan 2012-2014 of the FASFC does not only provide continuity with regard to the previous 3 business plans, but also allows for the active contribution of consumers, operators and their respective organizations based on the satisfaction surveys and SWOT analyses carried out between 2009 and 2011. It places special emphasis on improving the services rendered to exporters, without however compromising the credibility of the FASFC's certificates, and continuing the administrative simplification.



**The FASFC's policy priorities for the period 2012 - 2014:**

1. a safer food chain,
2. an Agency accepted by operators and recognized by society and the consumers in particular,
3. administrative simplification,
4. international trade: to provide better services to exporters and an internationally recognized agency,
5. an ambitious IT plan,
6. reliable and efficient laboratories,
7. a transparent Agency,
8. expansion of self-checking in the food chain,
9. a modern human resources policy.

These 9 strategic objectives were translated into 214 operational objectives; 65 % are being worked on and 26 objectives have been attained, including the implementation of follow-up controls, the reduced frequency of blood samplings in most pig farms because of the disease-free status for Aujeszky's disease (MD of 23/07/2013), the improvement of services rendered to exporters, among other things because of an improved dossier management, the completion of the Regulatory review concerning the H status, which makes it possible to

conduct further research and the creation of an evaluation commission at the request of the operators (RD of 2013/02/27 laying down the control measures in respect of certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products).

### 3. A professional and self-demanding organization

#### Quality management - safety - environment

These are a few of the pillars that support the FASFC in its assignments, and which allow it to achieve its goal of being accepted by the operators and being recognized by society and in particular by the consumers. In 2013, the Agency continued its efforts to reinforce the implementation of these 'good governance tools', which utilizes all possible synergies.

The ISO 9001, ISO 17020, ISO 14001 and EMAS audits of the FASFC have been successful and, in addition to retaining the certificates and the guarantee of reliability for the Agency's partners, these audits have also provided us with ideas for improvement and the necessary motivation to continue on this path.

In 2013, the FASFC emphasized the reinforcement and the implementation of the knowledge of the ISO 9001 and ISO 17020 standards (by means of internal and external training) in response to evolving standards and user needs. Based on its values and strategic objectives, an integrated policy was launched for the three domains: quality, safety and environment.

#### Internal control

In 2013, the FASFC has increased the implementation of the internal control even further, in particular with regard to raising awareness and risk management.

In May 2013, the FASFC organized a seminar which brought together the Agency's middle management and a delegation of other federal institutions concerned. Managing conflicts of interest and tackling corruption were discussed. Subsequently, a tool was developed to measure the maturity level of the internal control and a first survey of the middle management was organized. The results of this survey will be taken into account when drawing up the business plan 2015-2017.

In the framework of risk management - from identification and evaluation of the main risks to planning, starting up and following up on the impact of the control measures - several significant elements were added to the system.

#### Internal audits

Conducting internal audits is both an European (European Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004) and a national (Royal decree of 17 August 2007) requirement. Moreover, internal audits are required for the purpose of validation (certification or accreditation) of our quality and management systems.

In 2013, the FASFC carried out 46 internal audits. With the follow-up audits, 336 recommendations were evaluated; 81 % of these recommendations could be closed based on the efficiency of corrective actions, and thereby preventing a repetition of the non-compliances in the future.

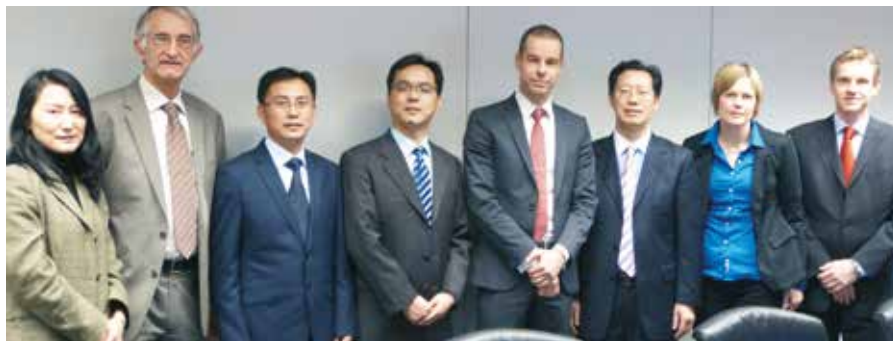
## Inspections and audits carried out by the European Commission

As is the case every year, the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission, which is responsible for supervising the controls carried out in the food chain by the competent authority of the Member States, has carried out a series of missions to Belgium.

One of these missions – a novelty implemented by the FVO in 2012 in the global audit system – had a horizontal character. This mission was carried out to verify the effectiveness of the controls executed by the Agency, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (article 8(3)). The FASFC clarified the way in which the ISO 17020 quality system was implemented, and which not only guaranteed the efficient and optimal uniformity of controls in the entire country by means of contacts with the representatives of the FASFC's general administration, but also during the visits to the provincial control units. The FVO has expressed its satisfaction with the implemented system and did not issue a single recommendation to the Belgian government during that mission.

The other missions were concerning the official controls on the food safety and the process hygiene criteria, the follow-up measures taken by the competent authorities with regard to the official controls on the safety of meat, milk and derived products, the use of the TRACES system and also the evaluation of the measures taken for the identification and the management of risks throughout the entire food chain, in particular concerning oils, fats and derived products.

These missions, the reports of which are available on the FVO website ([http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.cfm)), resulted in a number of recommendations by the European Commission and will be subject of a follow-up in consultation with the different Belgian authorities involved.



*Visit by a Chinese inspection team in relation to the export of pet food.*

## Inspections and audits carried out by third countries

The FASFC is also audited by third countries with a view to preserving and extending Belgian export markets.

Veal is a niche product that is highly sought after abroad. In 2013, our country received inspection teams from Malaysia and Israel for the evaluation of our control system and the companies concerned.

Early 2013, inspectors of the competent Chinese authority AQSIQ have visited Belgium within the context of the export of pet food. The positive result of this audit has led Belgium to become one of the only countries in Europe that has been granted the permission to export pet food to China.

## 4. International relations

In 2013, the FASFC hosted 8 foreign delegations. During these delegations, the working methods and the missions of the FASFC were explained, with particular attention going to the preservation of our export markets. Sixty-one bilateral agreements or certificates were concluded with 20 third countries. In addition, the FASFC has made 15 new general certificates based on the EU legislation available on its website.

The FASFC also participates in two cooperation projects supported by the BTC (Belgian Development Agency): a project with Benin (Agence béninoise pour la sécurité sanitaire des aliments, ABSSA) to improve the sanitary and phytosanitary quality of agricultural products and food, and a project with Morocco (Office national de sécurité sanitaire des produits alimentaires, ONSSA) for the delegation of control missions, self-checking and programming of controls.

Several bilateral agreements were made with third party countries and new certificates were drawn up for export to 20 countries.

### **Consultation between the food safety agencies of the European Union**

The consultation between the food safety agencies ('Heads of Agencies') took place twice in 2013 and was each time organized by the member state presiding the Council at that time (Ireland and Lithuania). During these meetings, a state of play on the work activities of the diverse work groups was provided, the possibilities for improving inter-agency collaboration were discussed and the Commission explained the revision of the Control Regulation.

The consultations were structured further in 2013 and the Heads of Agencies now have a permanent office at their disposal, which is a guarantee for continuity. The Commission now acknowledges the role this consultative body can play in developing a better and more efficient policy.

These consultation moments led to the conclusion that a completely harmonized approach in Europe isn't feasible at the moment, but that the exchange of information could help many countries to refine their models. The Belgian model received much appreciation.

## Towards a better service for export

In order to make the service rendered to Belgian exporters more efficient, the FASFC has chosen since 2011 to analyse its export-related processes using the LEAN-approach and to adjust where necessary. Getting rid of superfluous elements and focussing on the essence is the main idea of the LEAN-approach. Concretely, the FASFC departments involved, together with internal or external consultants, have mapped the processes, identified the bottle necks or loss-making positions and worked out and implemented solutions for those points. In doing so, collaborative partnerships with other regional and federal public services were also scrutinized.

In 2013, this exercise was completed and the result is quite impressive. The internal collaboration for the purpose of Belgian export was improved by closer consultation between the services involved and by appointing an export manager in the PCUs. The optimized work methods were recorded in procedures, responsibilities were clearly defined and agreements were formalized. The information and communication concerning export to all parties involved was clarified on the FASFC website.

All of this should result in an efficient service provision to the Belgian exporters. The FASFC has chosen to involve the most important stakeholders (the Regions, Foreign Affairs, professional associations) in the process of making clear agreements and defining responsibilities. In the work groups, which are presided by representatives of the professional associations, agreements were made on collaboration and determining priorities.

The agreements that were made in the framework of this LEAN exercise have to be further consolidated. Structural consultations with the different internal and external services involved and the sectors will be organized to regularly evaluate the correct application of the agreements and to make adjustments where necessary.







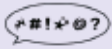


# 2

The FASFC  
at the service  
of consumers  
and professionals



## Communication in figures

		2011	2012	2013
Press releases ( including recalls of consumer products)		120 (48 %)	129 (52 %)	123 (44 %)
<a href="http://www.fasfc.be">www.fasfc.be</a> : number of visitors		774.367	854.578	988.239
Newsletter for the consumer	Published editions	6	6	5
	Subscriptions	11.808	11.530	12.305
Contact Point for the Consumer 	Questions	6.902	4.163	4.237
	Complaints	4.604	4.328	4.067
Information Service	Sessions	216	257	287
	Participants	5.660	7.202	10.426
Brochures	New brochures	9	11	8
Facebook 	Subscriptions	-	-	1.201
	Published messages	-	-	77
Twitter 	Subscriptions	-	-	413
	Published messages	-	-	77
Newsletter for veterinarians	Subscriptions			7.788
	Published messages	11	30	27
Newsletter for current and specific information 	Subscriptions			2.261
	Published editions			561
Mediation Service 	Complaints	211	150	120
	Complaints about finance	55 %	37 %	32 %
	Complaints about the interpretation of legislation, control measure disputes	30 %	33 %	31 %
Consulting Committee	Members	37	37	39
	Plenary meetings	8	9	8

## 1. Transparency

Transparency is one of the values of the FASFC and also constitutes one of the strategic objectives of its business plan 2012-2014. The transparency policy of the FASFC is continued by means of a website containing plenty of information for professionals, a separate website for consumers, active communication via 2 spokespeople, press releases, the publication of product recalls and by means of new initiatives such as diverse newsletters and the dissemination of press releases via social media (Twitter and Facebook).

### New website for consumers



To inform the consumers adequately, the FASFC has launched a website that is completely dedicated to them. This website can be accessed directly from the home page: [www.fasfc.be](http://www.fasfc.be).

On this website, all of the information that directly concerns consumers can be found: press releases, product recalls, information on certain food, practical tips (on storage, shelf-life, food poisoning, allergies,...), publications and videos of the Agency, FAQ...

The working of the FASFC contact point for consumers is also explained with regard to making a complaint and asking questions.

## Foodweb

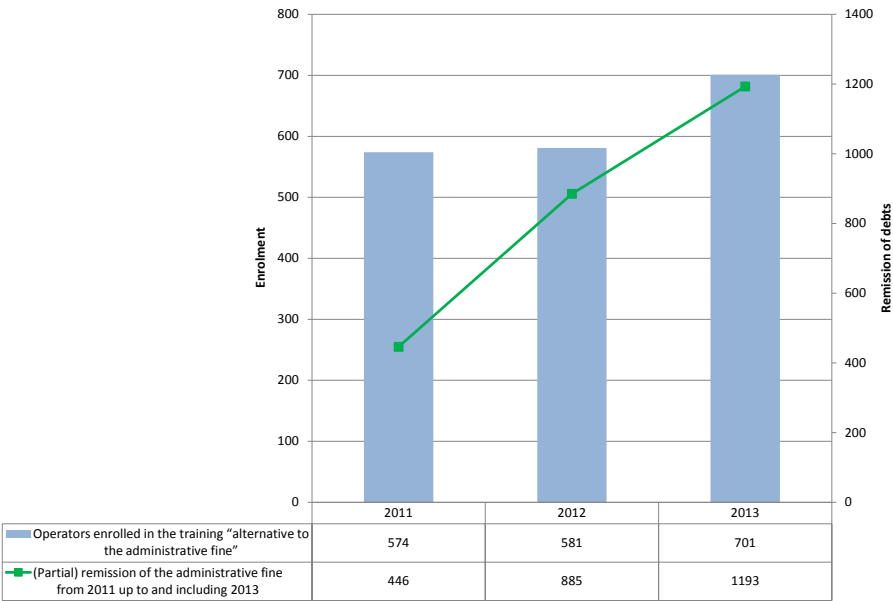
Via the web application Foodweb (available via [www.fasfc.be](http://www.fasfc.be)), the operators of the food chain have access to their own data (administrative data, inspection results, declaration in the context of the yearly contributions to the FASFC,...).

## 2. Training and support for professionals

### 2.1. Training as an alternative to an administrative fine

The Agency aims to improve the level of hygiene in the hotel and catering industry (restaurants, pita houses, snack bars, ...) and since 1/1/2011 offers them the opportunity to have the administrative fine dropped, provided that they follow a training organized by the information service of the FASFC. This initiative is only valid for the first fine incurred and does not include infringements concerning non compliances with the smoking ban. This initiative can be compared to the FASFC Smiley for operators that have a certified self-checking system.

*Evolution of trainings as an alternative to administrative fines*



## 2.2. Announced control actions

With the intention of improving the hygiene in the distribution sector (hotel and catering businesses, retail, wholesale, supermarkets, itinerant businesses and day cares), the FASFC organizes awareness and information campaigns for professionals and - since 2009 - the Agency also organizes announced control actions preceded by training sessions in different cities.

To this end, the FASFC organized training sessions in which 1,014 people participated. During the campaign all of the operators involved were systematically checked per municipality. These campaigns received a lot of media coverage and garnered the necessary public attention for food safety.

## 3. At the service of consumers and professionals

### 3.1. Contact point



The contact point of the FASFC allows consumers to ask questions and to file a complaint. All questions and complaints receive appropriate follow-up. Special attention is given to the response time.

### 3.2. Crisis prevention and management

Notwithstanding the fact that in 2013 the food chain in our country was spared of major incidents, the prevention of incidents is one of the FASFC's main concerns. The department crisis prevention and crisis management are responsible for:

- drawing up and updating the crisis scenarios,
- organizing simulation exercises to maintain and improve the authorities and operators' expertise in managing problem situations, including the participation in exercises organized by the government's Crisis Centre,
- Capturing possible signals that allow for the quick discovery and recognition of possible incidents.

The most important exercise in 2013 was a traceability exercise on eggs and egg products that the Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management service had organized in collaboration with the poultry sector, the distribution sector and the processing sector. Eventually, more than 3,000 operators were involved in the contaminated batch. Each of them had to carry out a real tracing on their products and had to inform their clients on the fictitious contaminations. This way, they were made aware of the importance of proper tracing. In the framework of capturing signals of possible incidents, a method was developed.

### 3.3. The Information Service

The FASFC's information service has been operational since 1/9/2008 and helps operators who have direct contact with consumers (hotel and catering industry, retail trade), to comply with regulations. In that respect, it organizes training sessions for groups of operators.

### 3.4. The mediation service



The mediation service deals with all of the complaints on the working of the FASFC and listens to the concerns of the partners of the FASFC, primarily, the operators working in the food chain. This information flow offers the FASFC an opportunity to improve its working methods on a continuous basis.

### 3.5. Consumer perception survey

Concerned with executing its missions and at the same time meeting the expectations of society, the FASFC asks the FPS Personnel and Organization and/or a private firm to organize an alternating triannual perception survey among the operators it controls, the consumers whose interests it serves and among its collaborators.

In November 2013, a second consumer perception survey was organized. On the one hand, a panel representative for the Belgian population was surveyed, and on the other hand each person that wished to participate in the survey could do so via a link on the FASFC website (open survey).

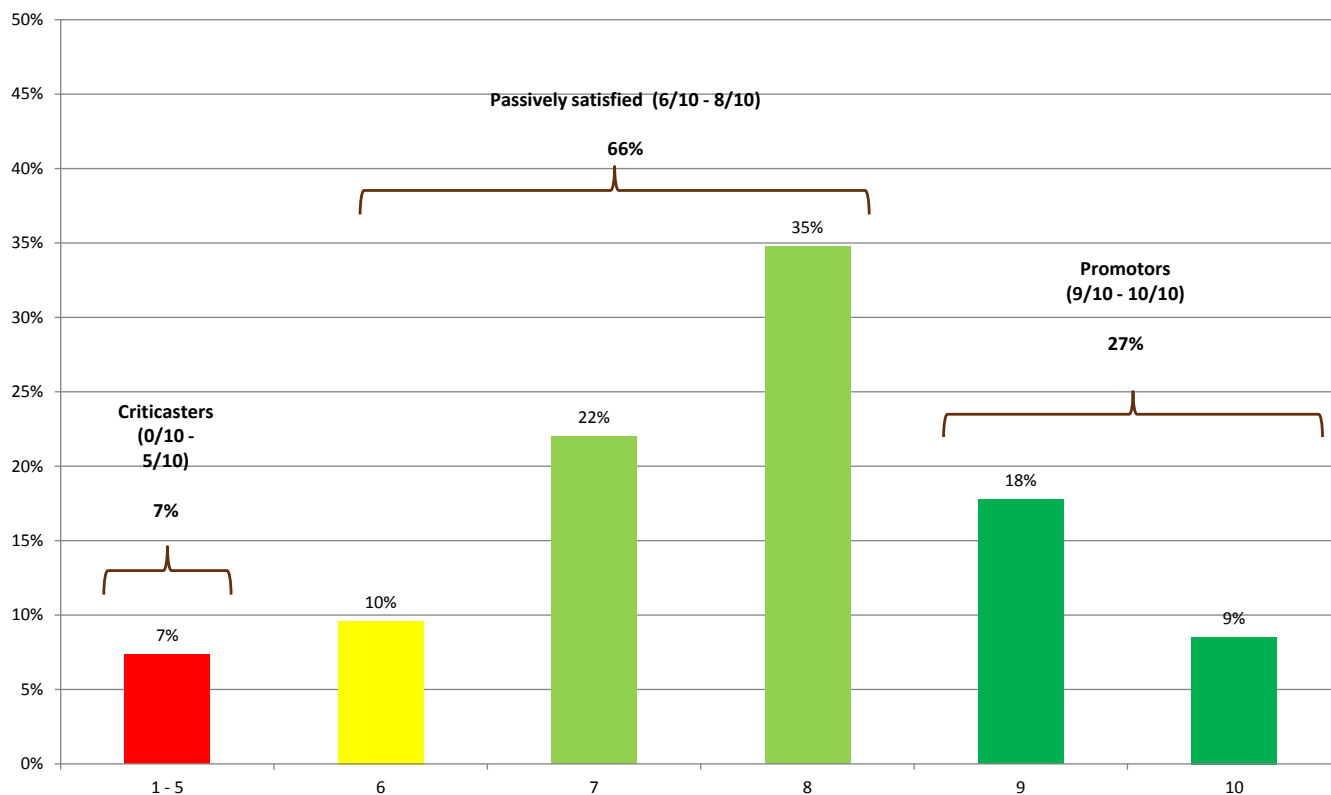
Three main themes were investigated: the consumers' attitude towards food safety (their concerns, their degree of satisfaction with the businesses visited,...) their knowledge about the activities of the FASFC (FASFC, communication channels, the point of contact,...) and their appreciation of the functioning of the FASFC (general appreciation and appreciation of the different activities).

#### **Important aspects for consumers**

The large majority of respondents (98 to 99 %) consider the freshness of food, the health safety factor, as well as hygiene and cleanliness of the shops and restaurants as important. 75 % also finds the nutritional value (ingredients, calories...) of food important.

The full report of this survey can be consulted on: [www.sondagepeiling.be](http://www.sondagepeiling.be)





93 % of the consumers are satisfied or very satisfied with the work of the FASFC.

The results of this survey show that the FASFC is getting more widely known. The overall high scores indicate the satisfaction with the Agency's work. Nevertheless, one third of the consumers is convinced that there are not enough inspections and 44 % believe that not enough information is provided. Communication remains an action point. This is also reflected in the poor use of the diverse communication channels of the FASFC.

## 4. Consultation

**The FASFC advisory committee** gives advice on all issues relating to policies adopted or that are to be adopted by the FASFC, either on its own initiative or at the request of the Minister or the Chief Executive Officer. The Committee is also a platform for consultations between the FASFC and its partners, where fully transparent discussions can be held on current issues, the evolution of regulations, funding, export

impediments, etc. The Committee is composed of 39 members representing the main business sectors, consumer associations and the authorities concerned.

The **FASFC** also regularly consults with the sectors and the national and international institutions, more precisely the European Commission and the OIE. The services of the FASFC's DG Control Policy together

with the most important professional associations organize multiple technical consultation meetings each year.

Within the provincial control units, local collaboration platforms with other services, such as police, customs and local governments are set up to carry out common actions more easily.

## 5. Self-checking systems and sector guides

The FASFC takes a lot of initiatives to help implement a self-checking system in businesses and to encourage its validation.

### Relaxations regarding the implementation of a self-checking system

To facilitate the implementation of self-checking systems in businesses, relaxations were granted. Until recently, these relaxations were limited to SMEs in the distribution sector, the hotel and catering business and the very small enterprises in the processing sector, but since 2013 these relaxations have been extended to all of the B2C establishments, regardless of the establishment's size. The relaxations allow establishments to implement the HACCP procedures described in the guide, so that they won't have to conduct their own hazard analysis any more. This makes it easier

to implement self-checking in small businesses that have little human resources and scientific expertise at their disposal.

The self-checking guides for companies that deliver directly to the consumers (B2C) will from now on be managed by the FASFC and are available for free on [www.fasfc.be](http://www.fasfc.be).

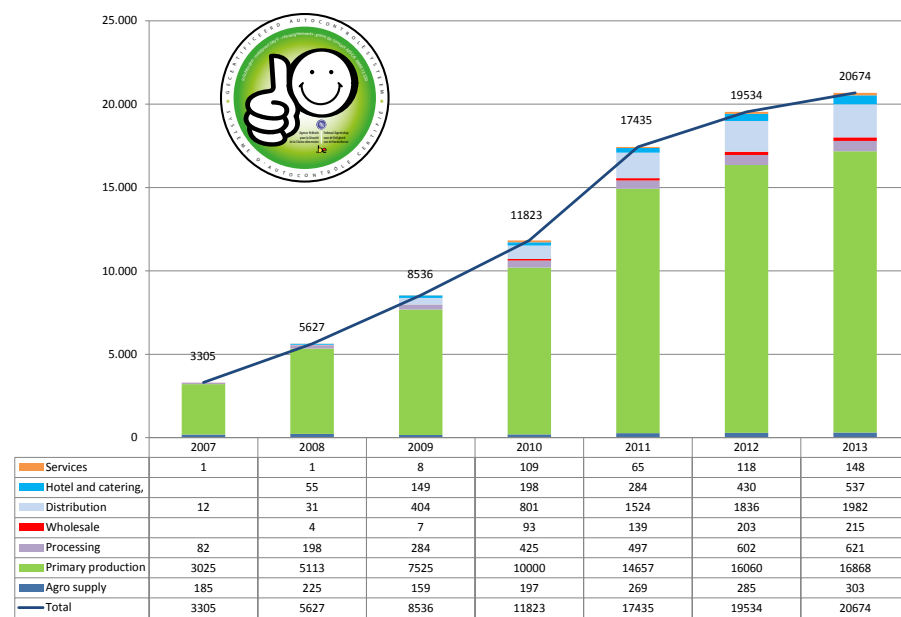
## Validation of the self-checking system

Operators with validated self-checking system, benefit from a reduced inspection frequency by the FASFC and a 75 % reduction on their annual contribution. The audits are based on the approved self-checking guides and are carried out by means of checklists that were developed by the FASFC in consultation with the representatives of the professional associations involved. For a few activities which are not covered by a guide yet (a guide is available for more than 99 % of the operators), the FASFC has developed specific tools to support these businesses.

In the sectors for which a guide is at hand, the audits can be carried out by the FASFC, but are generally carried out by one of the 14 accredited and recognized certification bodies (OCIs). Based on private specifications, these certification bodies (OCIs) can conduct audits simultaneously with the self-checking validation audits. These “combined audits” allow for costs to be reduced.

The number of businesses with validated self-checking system continues to increase. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the policy put in place.

The majority of these validations can be found in the primary production sector, but there is a clear increase in the distribution sector.



*By the end of 2013, 20,674 establishments had a validated self-checking system covering all their activities*

## The FASFC border inspection posts wins the Brucargo Award

The seventh edition of the Brussels Airport Aviation Awards took place on March 20, 2014. The “Brucargo Award” was awarded to the FASFC Border Inspection Post for the successful cooperation with Brussels Airport in speeding up the cargo flows.

Animals, feed, foodstuffs of animal origin, plants and plant products, including plant material, wood and contact materials imported from third countries are inspected at the FASFC’s border inspection posts that are located in the Belgian ports and airports.

This Award once again proves that conducting thorough controls should not necessarily inhibit the delivery of excellent services to the inspected businesses.

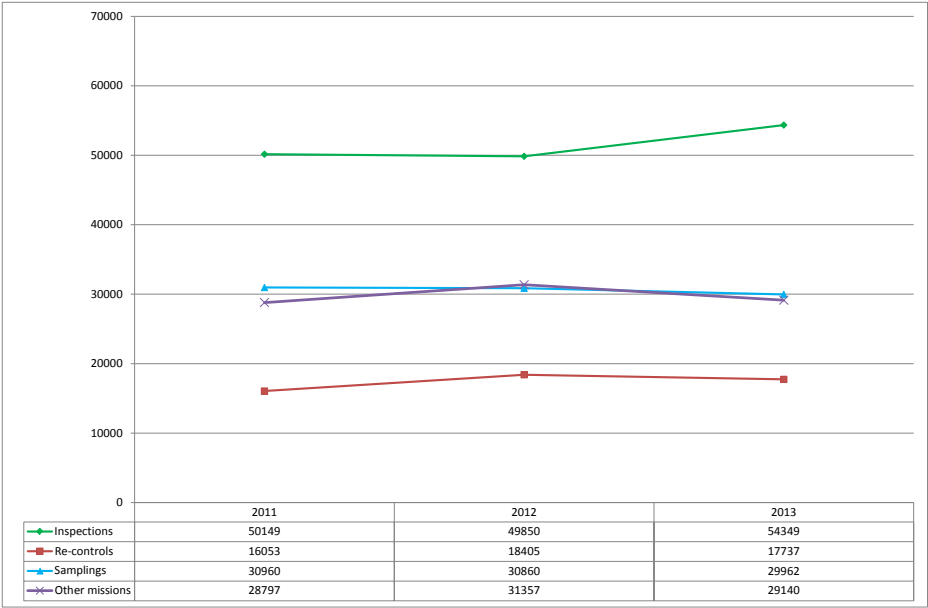




The FASFC performs different kinds of controls, among which inspections for which checklists (CL) are used. These checklists mention the different items that are to be inspected. They are available on the FASFC website, so that each operator can verify if his establishment is compliant with the regulations.

In case of an unfavourable inspection, a re-control is systematically carried out after the time required for changes to be made. This re-control and other type of controls such as samplings and additional controls at other operators' premises due to findings during an inspection form the subject of a report, not a checklist. 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

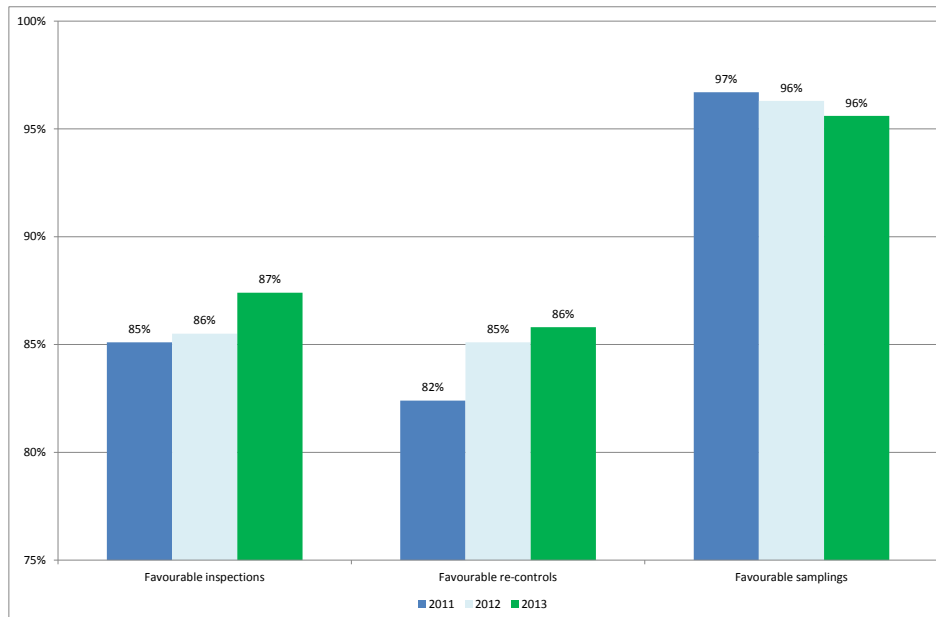


*The number of missions (nature of company visit)*

without a checklist: 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 food-borne outbreak, an irregularity by import or export, an application for approval, an incident in the food chain (traceability of a animal or contaminated product...).

Describing in detail all of the controls carried out by the FASFC would be beyond the scope of this report. They can be consulted in the full activity report for 2013 which is available in Dutch and French on the website [www.fasfc.be](http://www.fasfc.be). A few salient results are described in the following chapters.

## Results of inspections and samplings



## Inspections

In 2013, the FASFC carried out 186,870 inspections (controls with checklists), during 54,349 missions to 46,227 operators from a total of 146,393 registered operators.

### *Results of inspections, covering all sectors*

	2013	2013 vs. 2012	Compliance 2012	Compliance 2013
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	51.486	+10,8 %	74,1 %	76,5 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (before approval)	343	+6,5 %	93,2 %	95,0 %
Self-checking system	19.216	+8,9 %	65,3 %	73,9 %
Traceability (identification and registration included)	34.744	+15,9 %	91,6 %	91,6 %
Mandatory notification	24.283	+12,9 %	98,2 %	98,7 %
Packaging and labelling (including trading standards)	10.185	+4,8 %	88,4 %	88,9 %
Packaging material	584	-8,2 %	95,3 %	93,2 %
Waste management	4.057	-6,3 %	90,3 %	91,5 %
Transport	1.590	+1,3 %	97,8 %	98,2 %
Smoking ban	12.556	+17,1 %	93,9 %	95,6 %
Phytosanitary controls	3.214	-4,6 %	Not applicable	
Pesticides	2.567	-9,0 %	87,6 %	87,1 %
Animal health	1.554	-9,7 %	97,9 %	98,5 %
Animal welfare	11.108	+20,7 %	97,3 %	95,9 %
Medicines and veterinary guidance	5.567	+40,2 %	97,3 %	97,6 %
Epidemiological surveillance	3.699	+4,5 %	97,7 %	96,7 %
Approvals for export	117	+1,7 %	72,2 %	84,6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>186.870</b>	<b>+ 11,5 %</b>	<b>85,5 %</b>	<b>87,4 %</b>

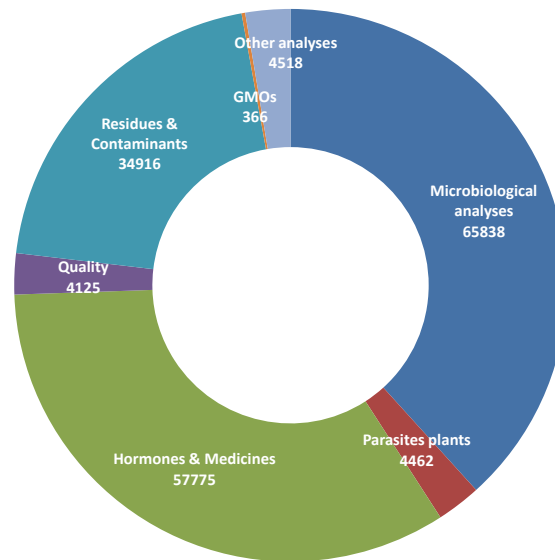


## Analyses

In 2013, the FASFC carried out 68,327 samplings and 172,000 analyses, 97 % of the analyses were compliant. 3,657 samplings and 6,879 analyses were conducted at the BIPs (Border Inspection Posts); 96.1 % were compliant. 75 % of the analyses were conducted in one of the FASFC's 5 laboratories, the other analyses were assigned to one of the 27 approved laboratories or to one of the 9 national reference laboratories.

These results reflect the attention the FASFC gives to sectors that constitute the largest risk for public health. Indeed, the microbiological analyses allow for a quick diagnosis of those micro-organisms that could possibly negatively affect public health. Analyses of hormones and medicines are usually associated with fraud and residues or chemical contaminations can cause long term damage to consumers.

*Sampling plan*



# 1. Primary production

*Results of 6,484 missions in 5,257 farms (plant production)*

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	3.576	98,4 %
Traceability (identification and registration included)	3.701	97,3 %
Mandatory notification	3.430	99,9 %
Pesticides (possession and use)	2.567	87,1 %

These results are in line with the results of previous years. Non-compliances have led to 217 warnings, 204 fines and 209 seizures. The majority of the offences were related to the possession of pesticides that are no longer authorized: 13 kg, 67 litres and 1,268 packages of pesticides were seized.

*Results of 9,505 missions in 8,725 livestock farms (animal production)*

	Inspections	Favorables
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in farms, vehicles, traders, assembly centres and inspection posts	8.231	97,9 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in semen (storage)centres and embryo production teams	214	99,1 %
Identification and registration of animals	6.771	88,4 %
Feedstuffs complying with the requirements on preventing BSE infection	1.131	99,9 %
Traceability (identification and registration included) in semen storage centres and embryo (production) teams	211	99,5 %
Compliance with prohibition of milk delivery	118	99,2 %
Animal health	1.125	97,9 %
Medicines and veterinary guidance	5.567	97,6 %
Epidemiological surveillance	3.699	96,7 %
Animal welfare	6.608	94,3 %
Mandatory notification	240	99,6 %

Overall, the results are comparable to those of 2012, but there are still a number of issues of concern. In 2013, the controls on the identification of small ruminants, traceability during transport, epidemiological surveillance in cattle farms, hygiene in dairy farms and animal welfare were less favourable than in 2012. The results of the

identification and traceability controls in pig farms, on the other hand, were better than in 2012.

The non-compliances have led to 1,126 warnings, 248 fines and 42 seizures. The non-compliances during the identification controls have led to the blocking of sheep

and/or goats at the premises of 5 operators. The non-compliances in hatcheries have led to the non-granting of the approval to 1 hatchery. There were 5 seizures of medicines.

### 1.1. Pesticide residues

More than 550 residues of different pesticides were looked for in 3,612 samples of fruit, vegetables and cereals. 97.8 % of the results were compliant (absence of residues under the maximum residue limits as laid down in the European legislation), which was 1 % better than in 2012.

The non-compliances gave rise to 4 fines, 5 seizures and 57 additional measures (inspections, additional analyses and seizures, if necessary) against those responsible for the non-compliant foodstuffs (manufacturer or importer).

### 1.2. Phytosanitary controls

In 2013, the FASFC carried out 14,612 analyses of plants, plant products, soil and other materials that can be carriers of harmful organisms; 95 % of the samples were compliant. Unfavourable results are essentially caused by thrips (tiny, slender insects with fringed wings) which are manifested during monitoring.

These samplings were carried out at the premises of producers, in storage rooms, shipping centres, public green spaces and forests. This surveillance makes it possible to provide the international guarantees

that our plants and plant products comply with the legal requirements. A considerable amount of samplings, in particular in the seed potato cultivation, is delegated by the FASFC to the Regions.

### 1.3. Feed

The results of the inspections in the feed sector are favourable: 92.5 % of the controls on infrastructure, self-checking, hygiene, traceability, packaging, labelling and mandatory notification and 98.8 % of the controls on the compliance with the requirements for medicated feeding stuffs were favourable.

### 1.4. Animal Health

Belgium is officially free of several diseases found in cattle and pigs: bovine leucosis, bovine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, Aujeszky's disease, foot-and-mouth disease, rabies, highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle's disease (found in poultry), classical swine fever, blue tongue, etc. The complete list can be consulted on the FASFC website.

In regard to the intra-community trade and the export to third countries, it is important for Belgium to stay free of these diseases.

The FASFC's sanitary policy allows us to maintain the disease-free status and extend the scope. Among other things, it provides for research and systematic analyses in case of abortion in cattle and small ruminants, an adapted winter campaign, and the storage of the samples taken during these campaigns in a serum bank, blood analyses of cattle coming from countries that are not officially free from certain diseases upon entry in Belgium, analysis and monitoring of developments of newly emerging diseases or re-emerging diseases. The FASFC assigns an important part of health surveillance to CODA-CERVA as well as to the Regional associations for animal health (ARSIA and DGZ) and spends more than €7,000,000 on these services.

### **Bee mortality screening: European pilot project Epilobee**

In May and August 2013, the last 2 series of visits of stage 1 (2012-2013) of the European pilot security project on bee mortality were carried out. This project followed-up on the 627 selected bee colonies of 150 beekeepers after the end of the winter and during the following season:

- spring visits: winter mortality amounted to 33.6 % For 20 of the beekeepers (13 %) all of the selected colonies died.
- summer visits: the season mortality amounted to 8.9 %.

When carrying out the clinical trials of the selected colonies, 65 samples for further research were taken in 49 different colonies with symptoms of disease: only the presence of the Deformed wing virus (DWV) and the intestinal parasite Nosema could be demonstrated in a few samples.

In September 2013, the second stage of Epilobee (2013-2014) started. This project again includes 3 series of visits of 150 newly selected beekeepers: 643 colonies will be monitored. For each selected colony, a sample of 300 adult bees was taken to count the number of varroa mites. On average 2 varroa mites were found per 100 bees. This average is considerably lower than the results of the same research conducted the year before. Furthermore, 16 samples were taken from 10 different colonies with disease symptoms. Further laboratory research revealed the presence of American foulbrood in 1 sample.

The following 2 series of visits are scheduled for the spring and summer of 2014.

### **Abortion screening**

For each notification of an abortion in cattle, sheep or goats, extensive tests are carried out in order to verify the presence of a large number of pathogenic agents. These tests are conducted in addition to the mandatory brucellosis test. The cause of the abortion is investigated by conducting

serological tests on the mother animal and virological and bacteriological tests on the aborted foetus or on the placenta).

In 2013, 9,506 abortions in cattle were investigated, which represented a decrease compared to 2012 (11.324). This evolution can be attributed to the reduction of the

number of abortions due to the Schmallenberg virus. The FASFC funds research carried out in the context of the abortion protocol and the collection of research materials. Not a single case of brucellosis was found.

## 1.5. Identification and registration of horses

In 2013, horses made the news in Europe or Belgium on several occasions. In January, Europe announced that ready-to-eat meals, which were assumed to exclusively contain beef, were actually completely or partially prepared using horse meat. The investigation of and the measures taken against these suspected ready-to-eat meals in Belgium were managed by the FPS Economy.

In response to this case, the European Commission founded a European coordination program for a period of one month with the objective of evaluating not only the extent of the labelling fraud but also the risk for the consumers. That is, horses are often treated with phenylbutazone, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to treat motor issues and other problems. This drug is however prohibited for horses that are intended for the food chain. The programme however provided for DNA analyses - which were carried out by the FPS Economy- and research on residues- which was carried out by the Food Agency. Although the European Commission only demanded one sample per 50 tons (1 out of 150 horses), the FASFC decided to analyse one out of 10 horses in the slaughterhouse. Eventually, the FASFC has analysed 73 meat samples taken in the slaughterhouse and 24 samples of imported meat. In none of the samples, the presence of phenylbutazone or any other NSAID could be demonstrated.

The European results of this coordinated programme are available on the website of the Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/horsemeat/tests\\_results\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/horsemeat/tests_results_en.htm)

Since 2012, the FASFC has been strongly involved in combating horse identification fraud. Our services are well versed in the different fraud techniques and rigorous controls are carried out, mainly in slaughterhouses. The fraudsters, however, have the benefit that there is a lack of harmonization between the different Member states on the implementation of the legislation on the horse identification and controls on the compliance of this legislation. Certain institutions that delivered passports until 2009 have also been found to have committed negligences. The multitude of official passports also does not facilitate the controls.

The irregularities discovered in Belgium are mainly concerned with equids of foreign origin. Of the 8,733 equids that were slaughtered in Belgium in 2013, less than one third were of Belgian origin. In 2013, 31,918 equids were involved in the official intra-community trade with Belgium as country concerned. The intra-commu-

nity transport of non-registered equids has to be added to this. Moreover, these movements represent a real risk for animal health and public health.

The FASFC has not only informed the European Commission on the frequently encountered problems, but has also advocated this issue to be considered a priority by the European Commission as well as the implementation of increased and harmonized controls in all Member States. The Agency has shared its expertise with the other Member States and has presented its different measures to fight fraud. Finally, in the framework of the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 504/2008 with regard to methods for the identification of equidae, the FASFC has played an active role in the discussions on securing the horse identification system.



## 2. Antibiotic resistance

The Belgian authorities and research institutions in general and the FASFC and its scientific committee in particular pay a lot of attention to antimicrobial resistance. Not only is the situation being monitored via analyses of meat and live animals, but concrete measures are also taken and prepared to achieve a rational use of antibiotics in the animal sector in order to reduce resistance and to prevent it from becoming a threat to public health.

Since 2011, the FASFC has been monitoring the antimicrobial resistance of pathogens and indicator germs in calves, pigs and poultry. The prevention of ESBL-producing (ESBL: Extended-spectrum beta-lactamase) germs in poultry is being researched among other things. This monitoring programme is ahead of the European Decision. As of 2014, this Decision will make it mandatory for all Member states to carry out monitoring programmes on antimicrobial resistance of, among other things, *Salmonella*, *Camphylobacter* and *E. coli* in poultry,

pigs and cattle. This way, the European Commission can get an overview of the European situation.

Together with the different operators from the sector, the FASFC makes a financial contribution and collaborates with the AMCRA (Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals). This expertise centre raises awareness among cattle farmers and veterinarians and draws up an inventory of the situation and creates guides to promote a responsible use of antibiotics.

## 3. Slaughter

All cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses must undergo ante mortem and post mortem examinations. These examinations are called inspections. The primary objective of these inspections is to guarantee the protection of public health by isolating and excluding meat for human consumption that shows pathological and anatomical abnormalities, that is contaminated by pathogenic agents, or that contains residues of veterinary medicines, pesticides or contaminants. The inspections are carried out by an official veterinarian, usually a veterinarian on assignment from the FASFC.

	Carcasses inspected	Carcasses seized
Cattle	480.009	1.674 (0,4 %)
Calves	328.066	284 (0,1 %)
Pigs	11.945.169	29.628 (0,3 %)
Horses	8.800	62 (0,7 %)
Sheep	121.265	188 (0,2 %)
Goats	6.783	118 (1,7 %)
Poultry	294.853.925	3.260.454 (1,1 %)
Rabbits	3.103.367	45.870 (1,5 %)

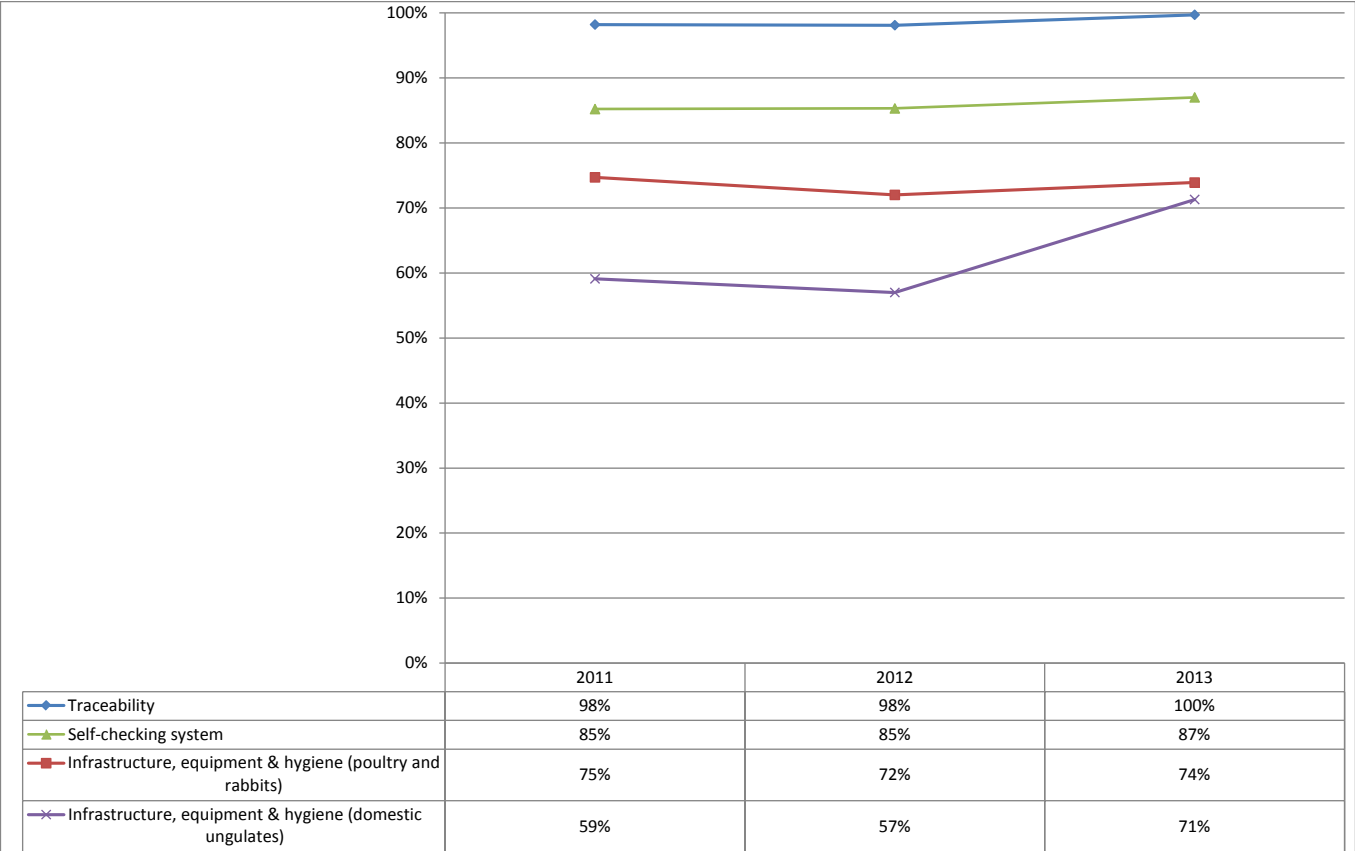


In addition to the inspection itself, the official veterinarian also carries out controls related to food chain information, animal welfare, specified risk material (measures taken with regard to BSE or mad cow

disease) and other by-products, laboratory tests, hygiene, infrastructure and self-checking systems.

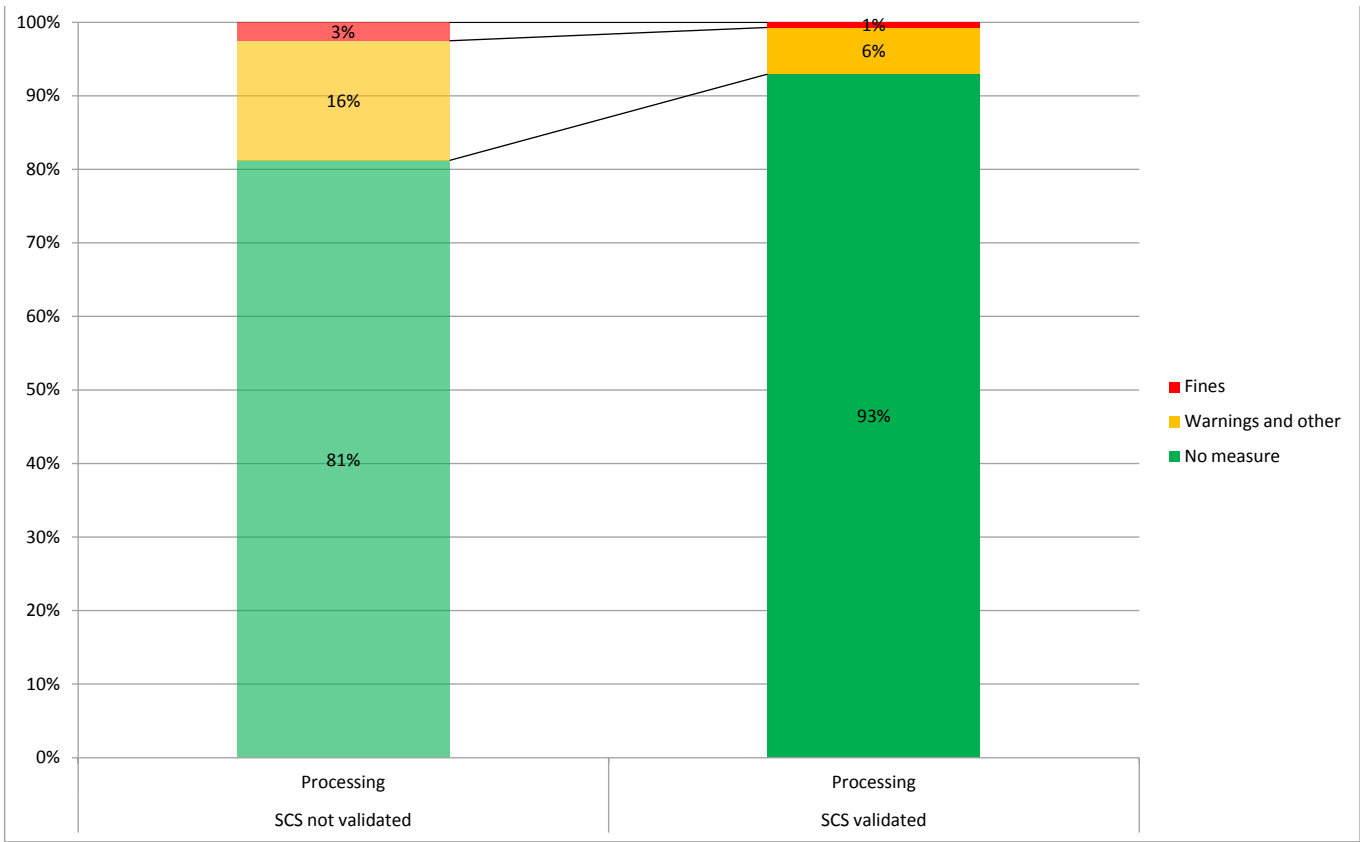
In 2013, FASFC staff members carried out 3,813 inspections in 115 slaughterhouses. The results of these inspections were usually favourable with a significant improvement of the results for the inspections on infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in the slaughterhouses for domestic ungulates (+14 % compared to 2012).

Compliant results in the slaughterhouses



# 4. Food processing

The results of the missions in food processing are much more favourable in establishments with a validated self-checking system (SCS)



Results of 3,376 missions in 2,777 establishments processing foodstuffs of animal and plant origin

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	6.122	92,2 %
Self-checking system	2.293	88,0 %
Mandatory notification	2.060	99,5 %
Traceability	2.168	97,6 %
Packaging and labelling	2.992	95,3 %
Transport	1.583	98,2 %
Waste management	1.341	96,8 %

Non-compliances led to 496 warnings, 89 fines and 3 provisional closures, 8 procedures for suspension or withdrawal of approval and 13 seizures. Compared to 2012, a slight (+1.7 %) improvement was noted with regard to the inspections on infrastructure, equipment and hygiene.

4.1. Milk and dairy products

Results of 271 missions in 265 manufacturers of dairy farm products (cheese, yoghurt, ice cream, butter,...)

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	270	95,9 %
Self-checking system	212	95,3 %
Mandatory notification	192	99,5 %
Traceability	174	95,4 %
Packaging and labelling	225	92,0 %

The results of the inspections of the self-checking system (-2 %), traceability (-3.1 %) and of packaging and labelling (-3.1 %) are less favourable than in 2012.

The non-compliances have given rise to 30 warnings, 1 fine and 1 seizure.

## 4.2. Meat and meat products

### Cutting plants

In 2013, there were 410 approved cutting plants for fresh meat of domestic ungulates. 185 cutting plants also had an approval for poultry, lagomorphs, farmed game and wild game.

*Results of 618 missions carried out by FASFC agents in cutting plants.*

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in cutting plants for meat of domestic ungulates	455	92,1 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in cutting plants for meat of poultry and lagomorphs	174	93,7 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in cutting plants for meat of farmed game	12	91,6 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in cutting plants for meat of wild game	39	97,4 %
Self-checking system	631	88,7 %
Mandatory notification	511	99,4 %
Traceability	560	98,0 %
Transport	477	97,5 %
Waste management	489	97,8 %

The results are similar to those of 2012, concerning infrastructure, equipment and hygiene of cutting plants for meat of domestic ungulates (+5,9 %); however, the results for inspections on self-checking systems have decreased (-8,6%).

The confirmed non-conformities led to 76 warnings, 25 fines, 1 procedure for a licence suspension and 1 seizure.

4.3. Miscellaneous products

This category includes foodstuffs derived from vegetables, fruit, cereals, potatoes and other plant products, bread and pastry, biscuits, rusks and dry pastry, chocolate and candy, beverages (lemonades, packaged drinking water, beer, distilled alcoholic beverages,...), tea and coffee, industrial honey, ready-to-eat meals, sugar, food additives and flavouring, food supplements, spices and sauces, baby food, processing establishments that use raw eggs for producing foodstuffs, etc.

Results of 1,047 missions in 969 establishments that produce miscellaneous products

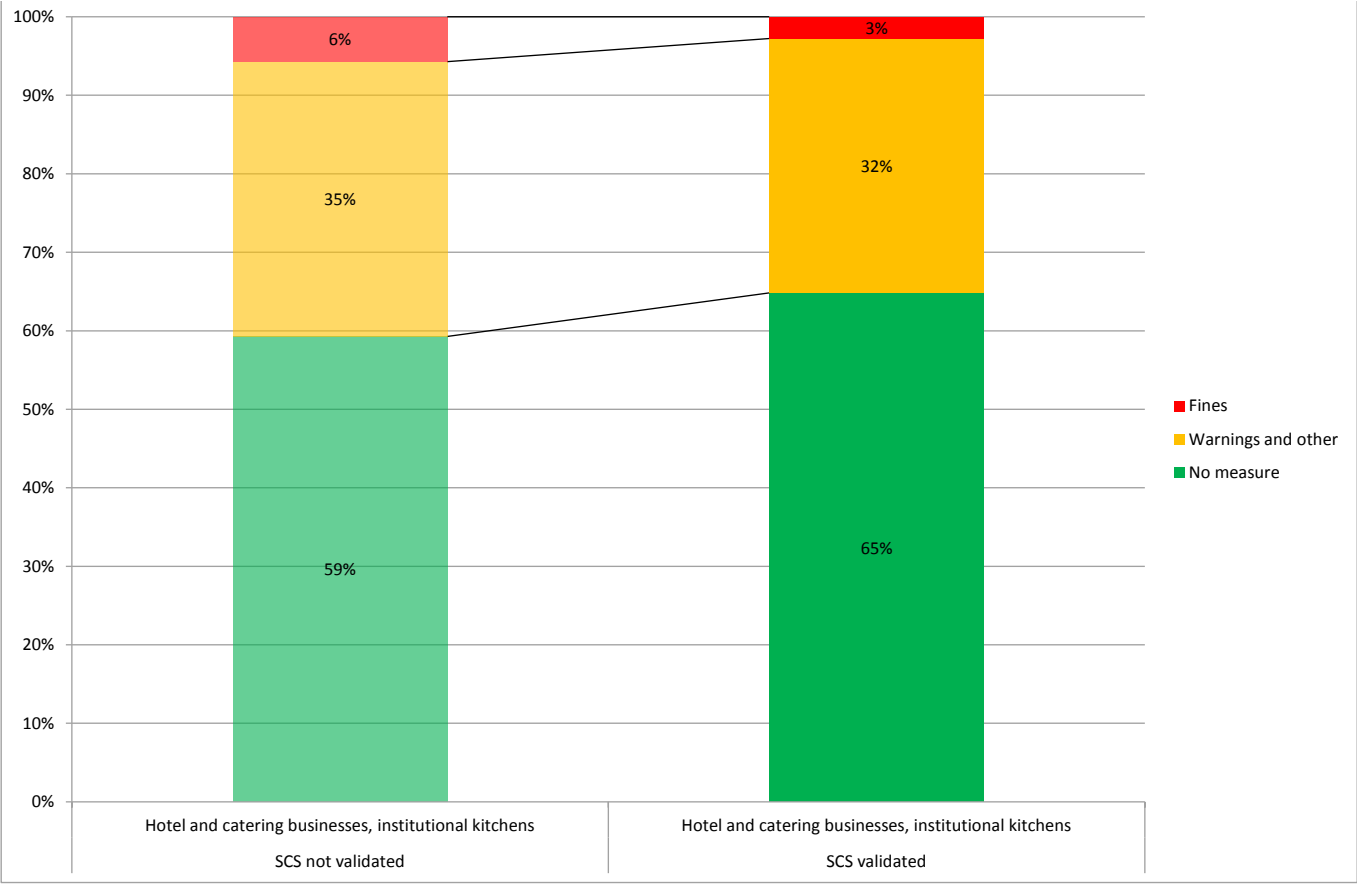
	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	940	83,2 %
Self-checking system	701	82,6 %
Mandatory notification	615	99,2 %
Traceability	493	95,9 %
Packaging and labelling	908	94,8 %

Compared to 2012, the results are similar, except when it comes to infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (-4.4 %) and traceability (-1.7 %) for which the results are not as good.

The non-compliances have led to 215 warnings, 32 fines, 2 temporary closures, 5 procedures for suspension or withdrawal of approval and 2 seizures.

# 5. Hotel and catering businesses and institutional kitchens

Results of the inspections in the hotel and catering businesses and the institutional kitchens are remarkably better in the enterprises which have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Hotel and catering businesses

Results of 14,464 missions in 14,117 hotel and catering businesses

	Inspections	Favorables
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in restaurants	11.484	55,1 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in itinerant businesses	970	64,9 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in registered pubs	1.221	88,9 %
Smoking ban	12.556	95,6 %
Self-checking system	6.686	58,5 %
Mandatory notification	7.499	97,8 %
Traceability	7.575	87,6 %
Hotel and catering businesses light	565	94,2 %

Hotel and catering businesses light

Since 2013, the FASFC uses a light version of the checklist for the hotel and catering businesses when these operators have an authorisation (non itinerant business). This has been developed in the framework of administrative simplification and to encourage operators to comply with regulations. This checklist consists of a limited number of items to be checked and will be applied on the condition that:

- previous missions have been favourable (no warning, no fines, no temporary closure,...);
- there is no processing of food,
- the manager is still the same,
- the same activities are carried out,
- no major non-compliant item have been observed.

There is an improvement in the results of the inspections for infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in restaurants (+3,5 %) and a distinct improvement for the self-checking systems (+17,6 %).

The confirmed non-conformities led to 4.724 warnings, 25 actions towards another operator, 1.115 fines, 33 temporary closures and 238 seizures (almost 700 kg of fish products, 650 kg of meat, more than 150 kg of fruit and more than 6 tons of other products).

Institutional kitchens

Results of 4,782 missions in 4,751 institutional kitchens

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in institutional kitchens	4.703	69,8 %
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in infant formula rooms	102	84,3 %
Self-checking system (except day care centres)	2.649	75,4 %
Self-checking system (day care centres)	231	76,6 %
Mandatory notification	3.321	98,8 %
Traceability	3.406	90,0 %

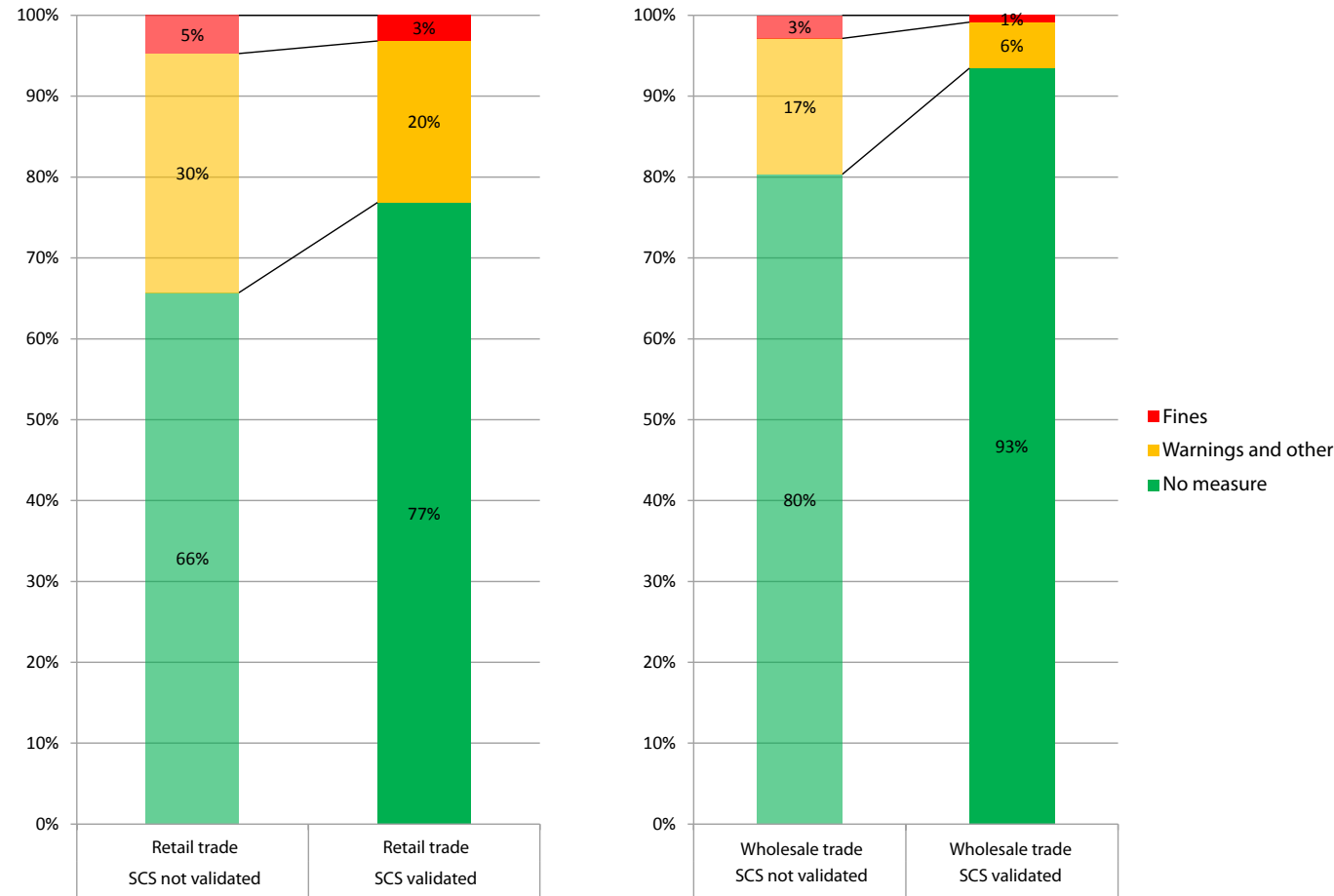
The results of the inspections on infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (+ 5.3 %), self-checking (+ 10.9 %) and traceability (+ 2.3 %) are better, compared to 2012.

Non-compliance led to 1,404 warnings, 16 actions towards another operator, 70 fines, 1 temporary closure and 20 seizures (approx. 200 kg of fruit and vegetables, 46 kg of fish, 28 kg of meat and more than 200 kg of other commodities).



## 6. Retail and wholesale traders

Results of the inspections in the retail and wholesale traders are remarkably better in the enterprises which have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Retail traders

Results of 12,098 missions in 11,746 retail businesses

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	12.516	68,7 %
Self-checking system	5.175	79,5 %
Mandatory notification	6.332	99,1 %
Traceability	6.967	91,0 %

The results of the inspections in retail businesses are better than the results of 2012 for infrastructure, equipment and hygiene (+ 5.8 %) and self-checking systems (+ 6.2 %).

Non-compliance led to 3,243 warnings, 21 actions towards another operator, 630 fines, 31 temporary closures, 1 procedure to suspend/withdraw an authorisation and 274 seizures (approx. 5 tons of fish, more than 1 ton of milk and dairy products, approx. 900 kg of meat and 10 tons of other commodities).

Wholesale traders

In 2013, the FASFC carried out 732 missions in 727 wholesale businesses.

	Inspections	Favourable
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	732	86,5 %
Self-checking system	356	88,5 %
Mandatory notification	453	98,7 %
Traceability	430	97,4 %

The results of the inspections on traceability are better than those in 2012 (+ 4.9 %).

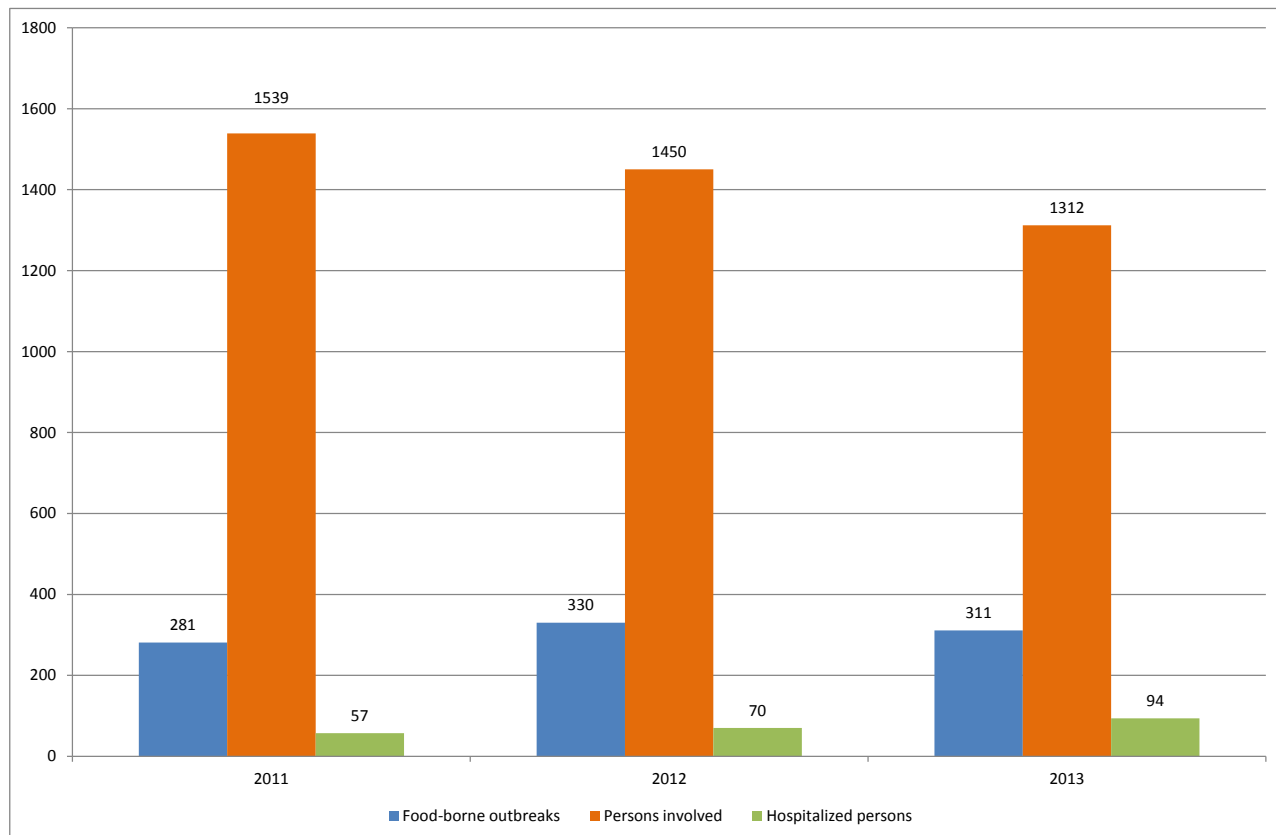
Non-compliances have led to 104 warnings, 25 fines and 11 seizures (approx. 4 tons of products).

## 7. 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 show similar symptoms and in which there is a (probable) causal relationship with the same food source.

*Number of notified food-borne outbreaks*



*The cause of a food-borne outbreak was identified in only 7.4 % of the cases by analysis of food remnants or by examination of the sick person.  
The main causes were:*

	Number of food-borne outbreaks	Persons involved	Hospitalized persons	Suspected origin
E. coli O157:H7/STEC	10	41	25	American fillet spread (steak tartare)
Salmonella	10	33	15	Eggs and egg products
Campylobacter	9	45	11	Poultry, mixed food
Coagulase + Staphylococcus	4	59	0	Fishery products, mixed food

## 8. Import controls

*Import controls*

	2012: consignments	2013: consignments	2012: consignments refused	2013: consignments refused
Live animals	2.993	3.259	26 (0,9 %)	34 (1 %)
Foodstuffs	25.603	25.023	188 (0,7 %)	152 (0,6 %)
Plants and plant products	18.944	21.033	68 (0,4 %)	93 (0,4 %)
Products not intended for hu- man consumption	1.852	2.170	54 (2,9 %)	66 (3 %)
Total	49.392	51.485	336 (0,7 %)	345 (0,7 %)

### Reinforced official controls on import

In the EU, there is a harmonized approach of checks on food and feed imported from third countries: reinforced controls. About 3,500 consignments have been imported, of which several have been subjected to analyses on pesticides (487), mycotoxins (41), chemical (6) and microbiological (18) parameters. 26 consignments have been refused because of the bad results concerning pesticides.

### Import controls in the framework of protective measures

When it appears that a certain foodstuff imported from a specific third country may represent a serious risk for human, animal or plant health and that it is impossible to manage the risk sufficiently, the European Commission may determine special conditions by way of protective measures. These protective measures are aimed at controlling the radioactivity of foodstuffs from Japan (caused by the nuclear incident in Fukushima) and from other third countries (caused by the nuclear incident in Chernobyl, GMO in rice or melamin in certain foodstuffs).

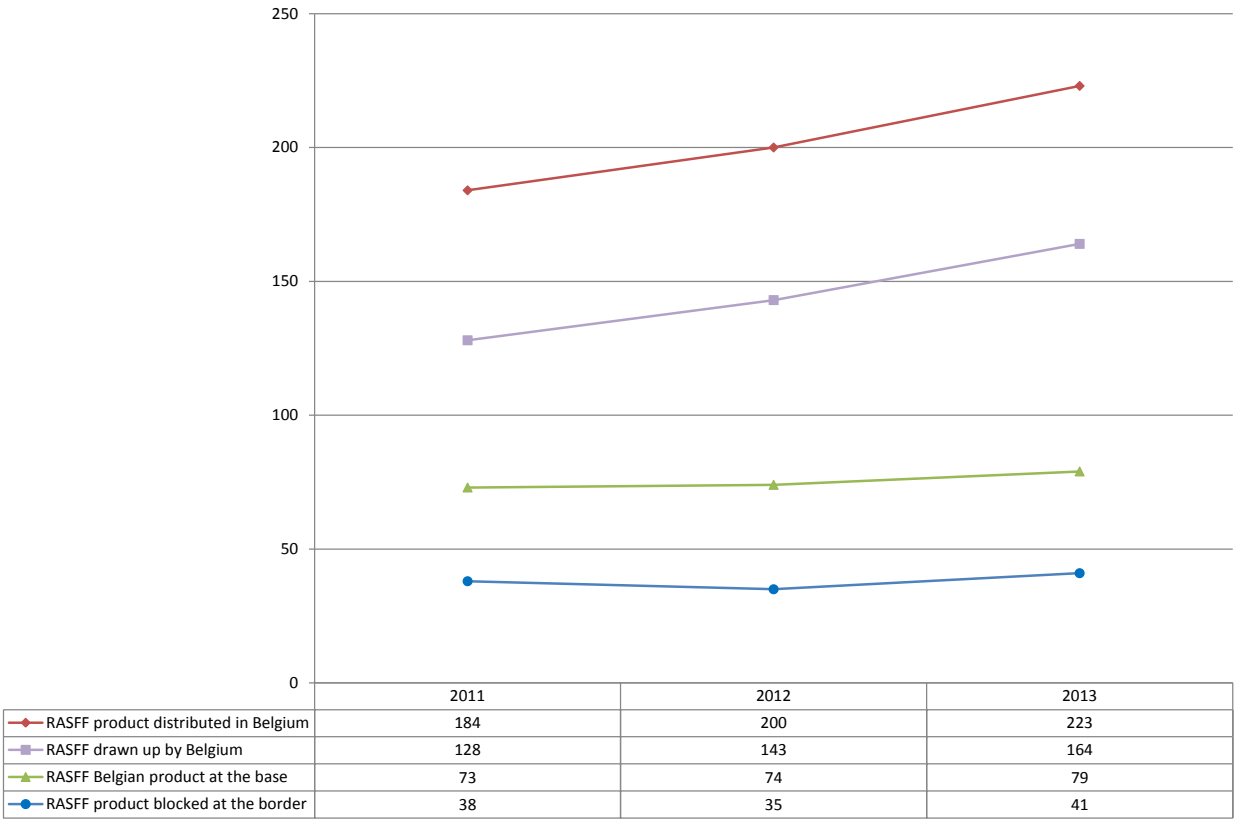
These products are presented to the FASFC to be inspected, after which the products are submitted to a document inspection (certificate, analysis report,...) and which may be sampled for further research. In 2013, 2,727 consignments have been imported, of which 312 consignments underwent sampling: 13 were rejected, of which 4 due to non-compliant documents. The results of the analyses are displayed in chapter 6 (product controls).

RASFF

In 2013, the EU registered 3,133 notifications, thanks to the European rapid Alert System (RASFF, Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) for products which may represent potential risks for human or animal health.

In 2013, most products concerning RASFF messages were - fruit and vegetables (22.6 %), feedingstuffs (12.8 %), nuts and derived products (10.4 %), meat (products) (8.6 %) and herbs (7.9 %). Aflatox-

ins (12.8 %), not authorized GMO (6.1 %), forbidden antibiotics (chloramphenicol: 4.3 %), *Listeria monocytogenes* (3.7 %) and *Salmonella* (3.7 %) are the dangers to occur in most cases.



## 9. Fighting fraud

In the context of the fight against fraud with regard to the 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 horses, pesticides, internet sales of food supplements, veterinary medicinal products...).

This Unit collaborates actively with various Belgian authorities - including the police and the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products – as well as international bodies.

It attends meetings of the working groups of:

- the Multidisciplinary Hormone Unit (MHC),
- the Interdepartmental Commission for the Coordination of Fraud Control in economic sectors (ICCF),

- the Interdepartmental Coordination Unit for Food Safety Inspection (ICVV),
- the Multidisciplinary Fraud Control Unit for the Safety of the Food Chain (MFVV), which is chaired by the FASFC,
- the Working Group of Enforcement Officers (WGEO).

### *Fighting fraud*

	2011	2012	2013
Fraud Investigations	271	245	176
Participation in roadside inspections	49	37	37
Specific actions (food supplements, horses,...)	32	30	34
Coordinated actions with other authorities	222	96	104
Infringements	240	221	225

## Passenger checks at customs

In collaboration with customs, the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP) and the FPS Public Health and the FASFC conducted checks at Brussels National Airport (Zaventem) on passengers' luggage 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 import of cosmetics and medicines.

During the 24 checks carried out in 2013, the FASFC, the FAMHP and the FPS Public Health seized large quantities of products (1,199 kg of foodstuffs, 1,481 cosmetic products and 974 medicines).



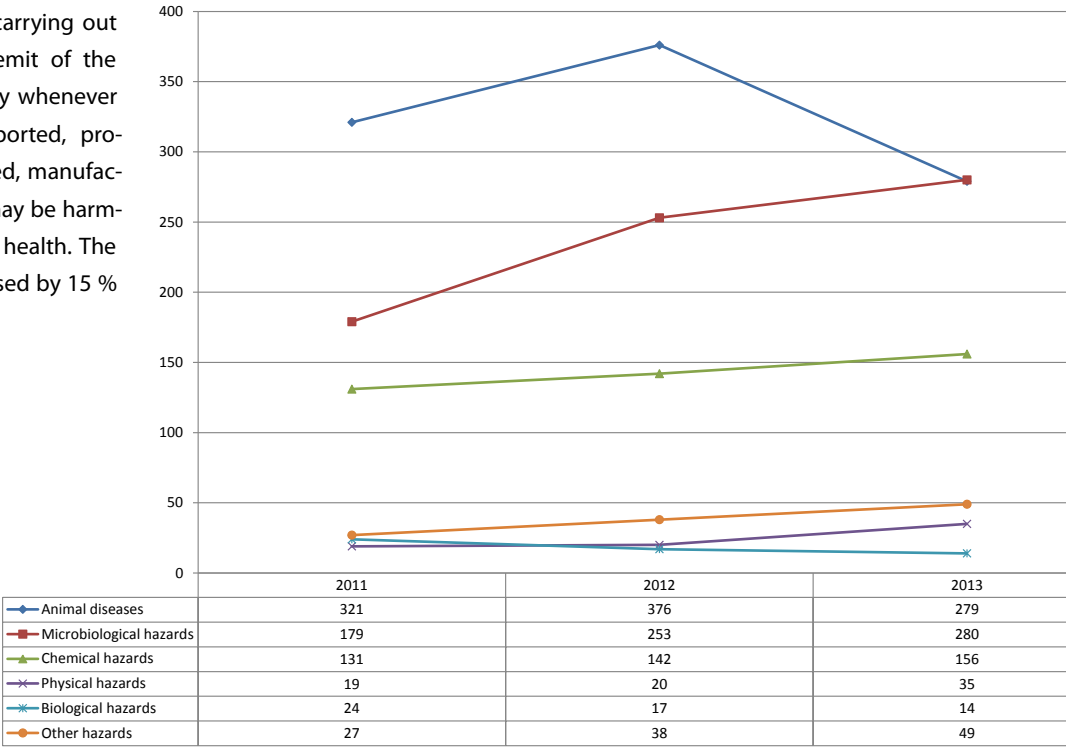
In 2013, greater attention was given to pet checks in the framework of the rabies prevention awareness campaign. There have been checks on 31 cats and dogs, 5 of them did not possess the required documents.

As a result of information on Facebook, the FASFC carried out a special nocturnal action at the Brussels Airport. Four dogs from Turkey were brought into the country; their documents showed irregularities. Regularly, dogs are transported by plane by volunteers and tourists, acting as intermediaries. Blood samples showed that the dogs have been vaccinated for rabies, but because of falsified certificates they have been sent back to Turkey.



## 10. Mandatory notification

Each food business operator carrying out activities falling within the remit of the FASFC must inform the Agency whenever he/she suspects that an imported, produced, raised, grown, processed, manufactured or distributed product may be harmful to human, animal or plant health. The number of notifications increased by 15 % when compared to 2012.



# 11. Sanctions

*Consequences of non-compliances*

	2011	2012	2013
Warning	14.892	13.952	13.512
Fine	4.078	4.387	5.122
Seizures	1.477	1.601	1.443
Temporary closures	172	123	115
Amount of administrative fines	2.427.470 €	2.668.572 €	2.868.715 €

In 2013, seizures amounted to 1,716 tons of products, including 913 tons of fruit and vegetables, 518 tons of animal feed and 129 tons of various food commodities.



4

Food chain  
safety  
barometers

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

These barometers rely on indicators that were calculated on carefully chosen measurable parameters. Most of these indicators are based on the results of the FASFC control program. Since these indicators have different effects on the safety of the food chain, their relative importance has been appraised. The barometers 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.

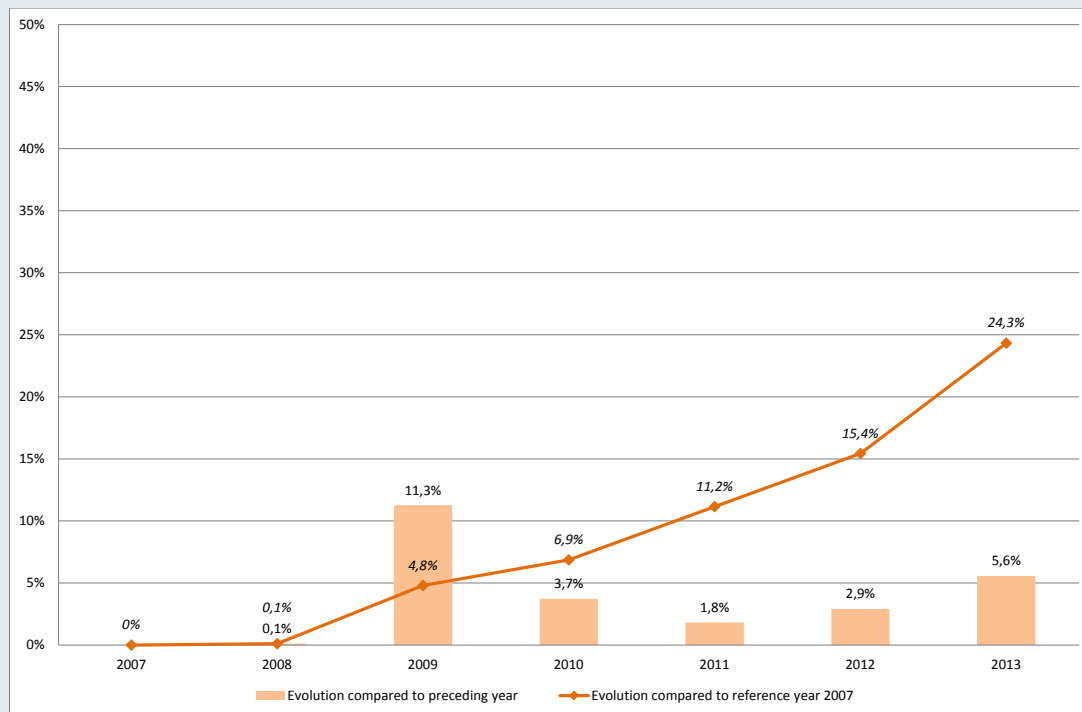
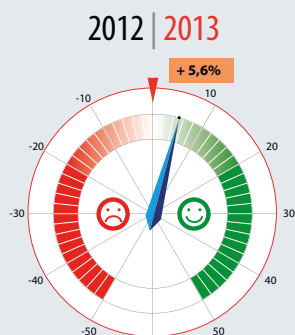
Generally, the results used for developing the barometers, show that food safety in our country is at a high level.

## Food safety barometer

Compared to 2012, the barometer rose by 5.6 % in 2013. This rise is mainly the result of an increase in the number of validated self-checking systems in the different sectors, the improvement of the inspection results, less food-borne outbreaks and salmonellosis, and more notifications concerning food safety. This indicates a greater awareness amongst operators.

A less favourable evolution was observed in the results of the traceability inspections in the food chain and in the number of *Listeria monocytogenes* contaminations. This is probably the consequence of better diagnostics.

Since 2007 (the start of the assessment of the safety of the food chain by means of barometers) a steady positive trend can be discerned.

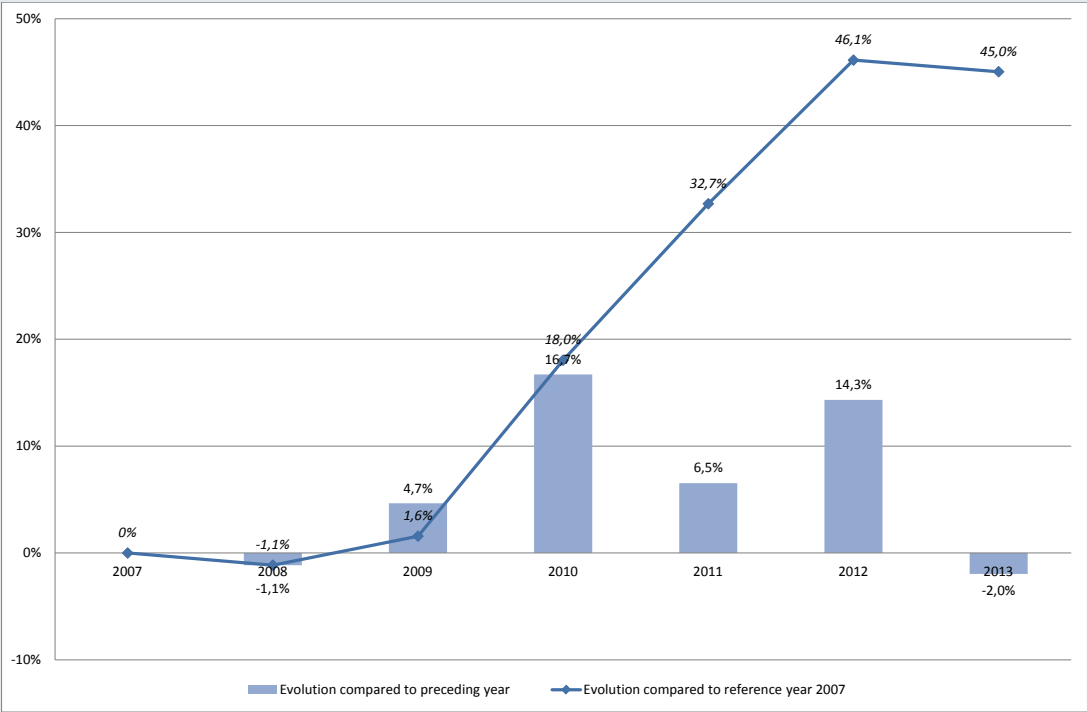
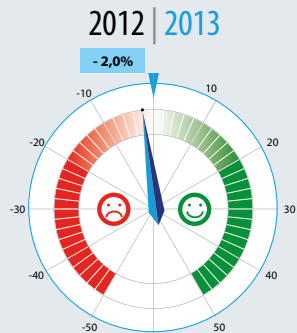


### Animal health barometer

Compared to 2012, a slight decrease (- 2.0 %) in the animal health barometer could be observed. This is the result of fluctuations in various indicators, in a positive sense as well as in a negative sense.

From 2009 till 2012, the barometer of animal health showed a positive trend and this despite a few outbreaks of (re)emerging animal diseases (bovine brucellosis,

Schmallenberg virus, bovine tuberculosis, equine infectious anemia). The influence of these outbreaks on the animal health barometer remained relatively limited.

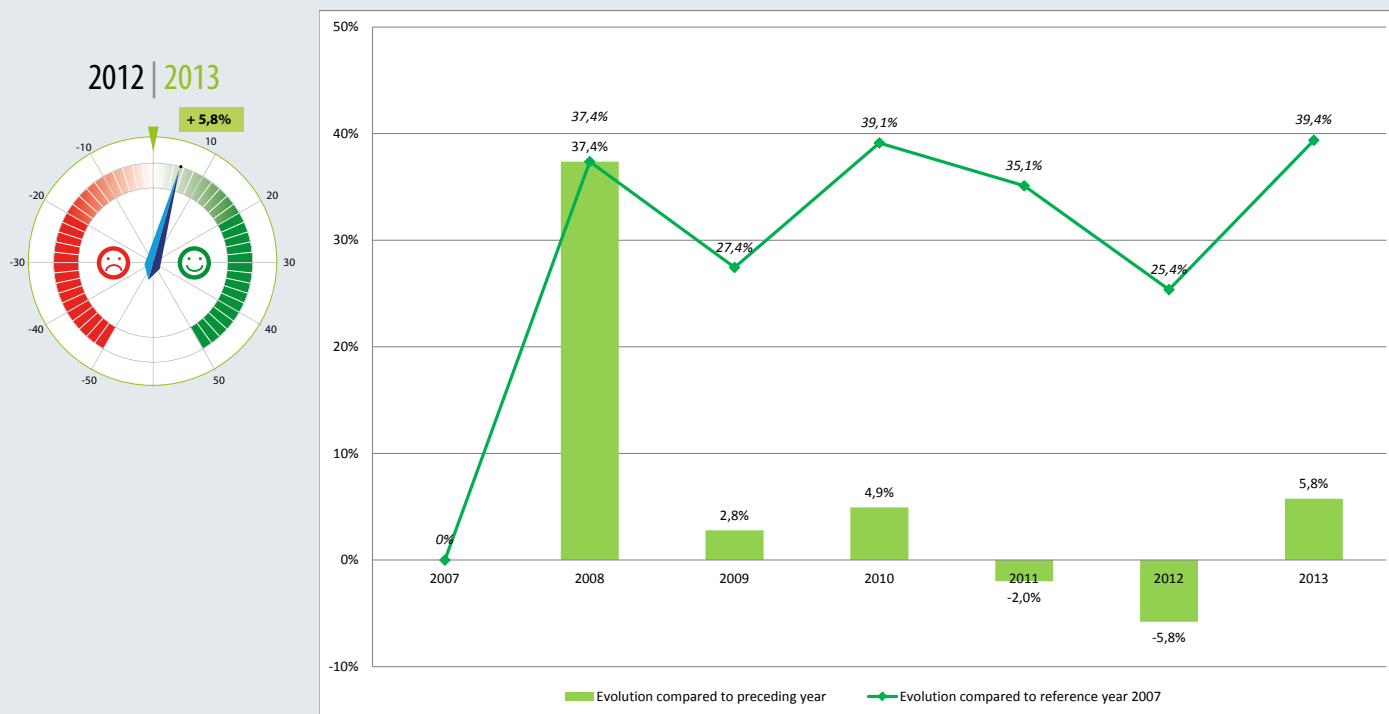


### Plant health barometer (phytosanitary status)

Between 2012 and 2013 the plant health barometer increased by 5.75 %. The main reasons for this are the favourable evolutions which were observed in the annual percentage of the core activities performed with a validated/certified self-checking system, the increased number of favourable

phytosanitary inspections (physical inspections), the percentage of regulated harmful organisms for which at least one sample is tested positive per year in relation to the total number of regulated harmful organisms and the percentage of compliant results for pospiviroids.

On the contrary, unfavourable results were observed in the compliancy rate of the phytosanitary inspections at import and in the percentage of compliant results for Sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*).



Although, there has been a general increase in self-checking in the plant sector since 2009, the negative values of the 2011 and 2012 barometers can be explained

largely by the negative evolutions of the indicator concerning the notifications of plant diseases and harmful organisms, and of the indicator concerning the phytosanitary

inspections at import. In addition, both indicators had a high weighting factor.







5

The FASFC  
at your service

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## Central services

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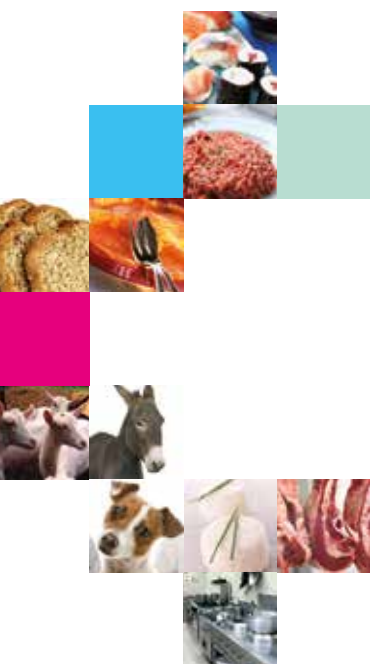


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