



Facts and figures

Safe food day after day: our job!

2016



Federal Agency
for the Safety
of the Food Chain

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Our mission

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



Herman Diricks,
Chief Executive Officer

Foreword

Dear reader,

2016 was a busy year, with the Agency's employees undertaking missions with much enthusiasm, taking samples, following up on important dossiers and promoting the Belgian policy in the rest of the world.

The FASFC's central role is to monitor the food chain. This is something to which we remain 100% committed. In 2016, our employees undertook 119.487 missions at 66.038 companies. The results are something to be proud of. 87% of the checked areas (checklists) were favourable. Of the 85.905 samples, 96,8% made the grade. This may be regarded as a high level of food safety, and this is not only attributable to the FASFC but also to the companies and sector organizations.

What is noticeable is that schools are doing considerably better. In cooperation with the information service, a lot of efforts have been made to raise awareness of food safety in school kitchens. We hope this improvement is a sustainable trend.

One point of concern, however, is the food safety barometer, which, for the first time, suffered a minor setback. We were bound to run into a ceiling, and that was apparently the case in 2016. It does mean that all parties involved must remain vigilant.

At the FASFC, we work hard to maintain the effectiveness and quality of our inspections. Even in times of austerity, we focus on the support and training of our employees. Did you know that with its six training days per year and per full-time equivalent, the FASFC belongs to the top of the federal office? With a satisfaction level of 87% among the entire staff, we score very well. One of the first points that an external trainee quoted in my department was the 'particular enthusiasm displayed by the employees'.



But the FASFC, too, has to tighten its belt as a government service. This means, among other things, that the work must be done by fewer people. The logical consequence is that the number of missions has declined since 2015. This is in itself not a problem, but it does indicate that the bottom of what can be compensated with efficiency gains has been reached.

Animal health surveillance is also part of the FASFC's mission. In 2016, we escaped avian influenza infections in professional settings. This is no coincidence (although a bit of luck may be involved), but the result of the sector's professional attitude and the strict application of biosafety measures. However, in the future, we will have to bear in mind that the risk may well persist for the time being. The industry is ready, but the non-professional poultry keepers must also take their responsibility. Measures, such as the requirement to keep birds indoors, are really essential to avoid problems.

In 2016, measures to reduce the antibiotic resistance in livestock also gained cruising speed. The results are encouraging and give us hope for the future. It is a fine example of how cooperation between the government and the industries concerned leads to good results with a minimum of additional regulation. The FASFC is also active in the plant production industry. Indeed, further to inspections, 6.038 analyses were conducted to determine whether harmful organisms were present.

In addition, the FASFC takes other initiatives to raise the level of businesses and to fulfil our social role. All parties needed to find their feet at first, but the preparations of 2016 are bound to pay off this year.

The export unit has been further expanded. Supporting exports belongs to the FASFC's role of general interest. Years of efforts of the companies and the government are beginning to bear fruit. We have now built a good reputation abroad, but cannot afford to rest on our laurels. In order to preserve our reputation, the quality and credibility of the certificates which the FASFC issues daily are of paramount importance.

One of the most important regions according to our exporters is China, and 2016 was concluded with a successful inspection mission from our Chinese colleagues. It is a long-term effort, but trust between the FASFC and the Chinese inspection services has grown, just like the confidence in the Belgian food industry.

Concluding on such a positive note is always pleasant. Consumers, citizens and food companies can count on the FASFC's staff to continue to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities.

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The FASFC

1



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

The FASFC integrates all control services, which are responsible for the entire food chain. It not only checks food, animal feed, fertilizers and plant protection products, it is also responsible for the prevention and control of animal diseases and plant health aspects (plant production sector). The Agency is also responsible for establishing the rules for checks, certification and infrastructure standards operators have to comply with. Moreover, the Agency manages all communications geared towards operators and also pays particular attention to consumer information

Approximately 1.260 staff members spread across:

- the central administrations, accredited according to ISO 9001 (approximately 420 staff members in 2016);
- 11 ISO 17020 accredited provincial control units (PCUs) (approx. 670 staff members in 2016);
- 5 internal ISO 17025 accredited laboratories (approximately 150 staff members);
- a department carrying out coordinated fraud control investigations: the National Investigation Unit (approximately 20 staff members);

A close cooperation with various federal and regional public services, including police and customs and private institutions;

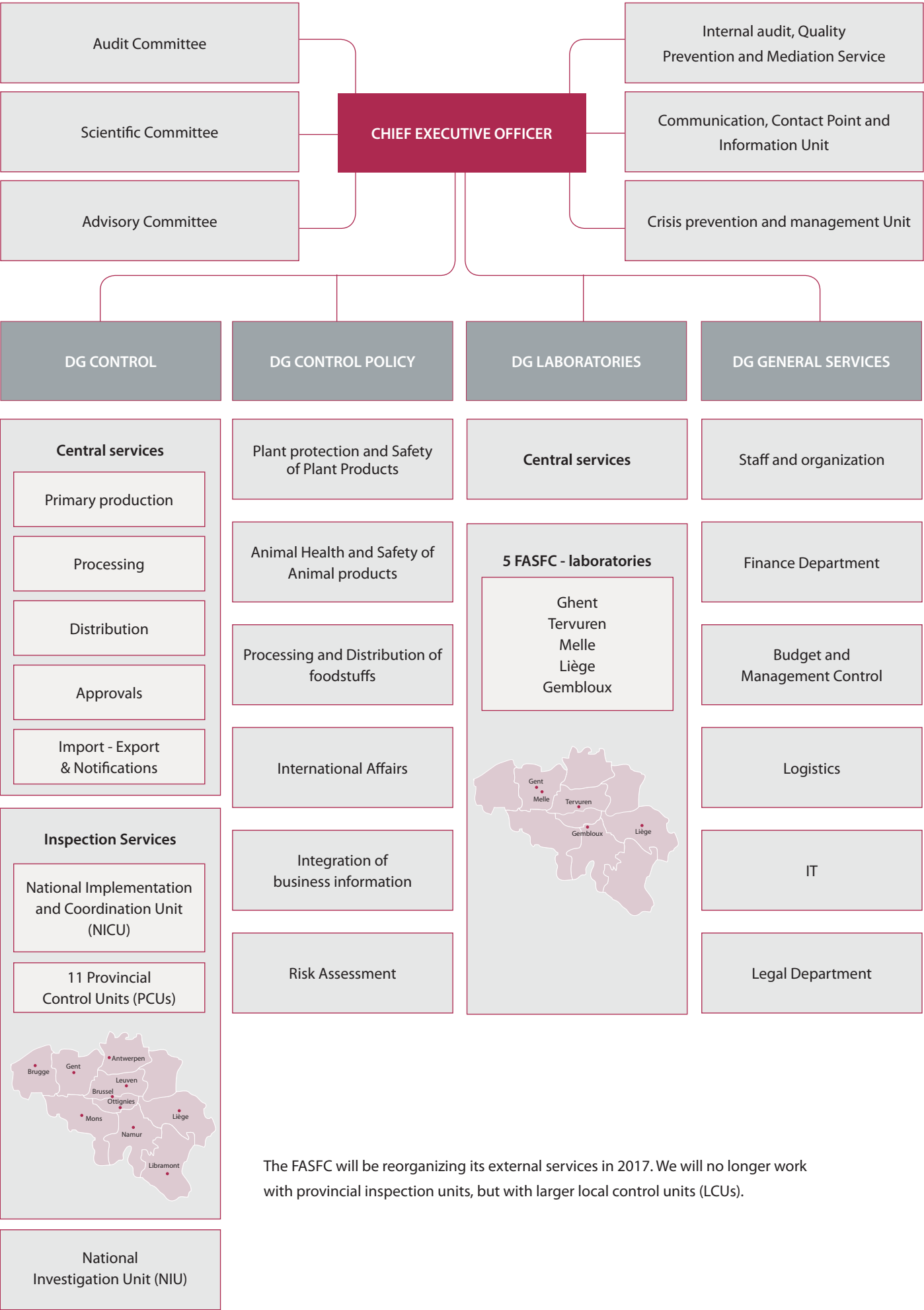
A budget of approximately € 164 million.

To carry out its assignments the FASFC can count on:

Approximately 600 self-employed associates on assignment, which are the equivalent of about 350 FTEs; the Agency can assign inspections, checks, samplings, certifications and audits to these self-employed veterinarians, bio-engineers, masters, industrial engineers or bachelors or to legal entities (certification, audit, sampling or checks);

A network of approximately 60 external laboratories approved by the FASFC, and 9 national reference laboratories;

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FASFC

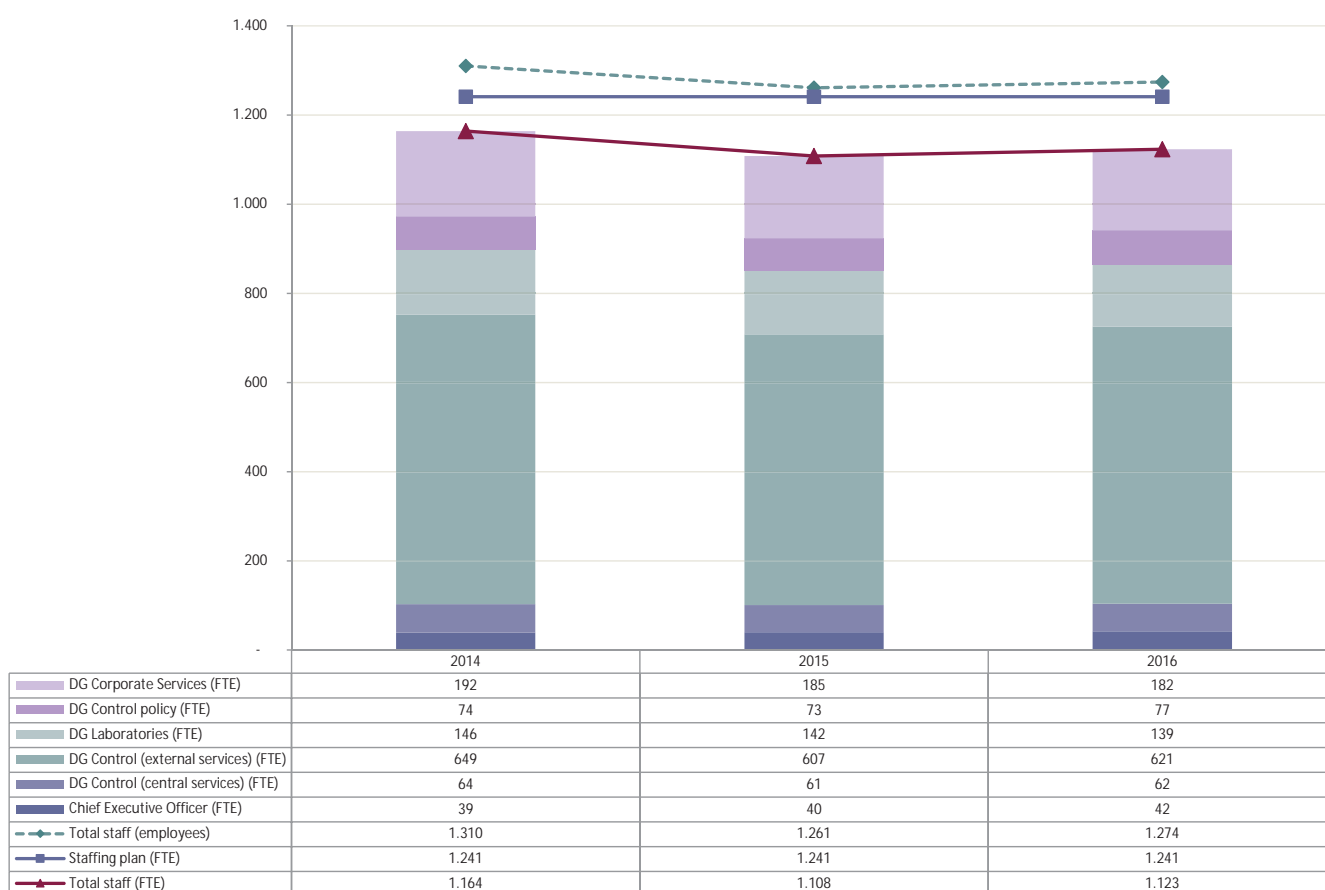


The FASFC will be reorganizing its external services in 2017. We will no longer work with provincial inspection units, but with larger local control units (LCUs).

1.1. Personnel

After a falling trend over a two-year period, we noticed a slight increase in the number of staff at FASFC in 2016.

FTE : full-time equivalent



1.2. Budget

In addition to a government allocation, which comes from public funding, the Agency has its own revenues. In 2016, those earnings are lower than in 2015. Since 2012, the government has imposed drastic saving measures.

For the FASFC this meant saving €1.902 million in 2016, limiting expenditure to the level needed to ensure continuity of the Agency's core business. These measures have strongly curbed the execution of a number of projects, but the workload has not diminished.

Expenditure

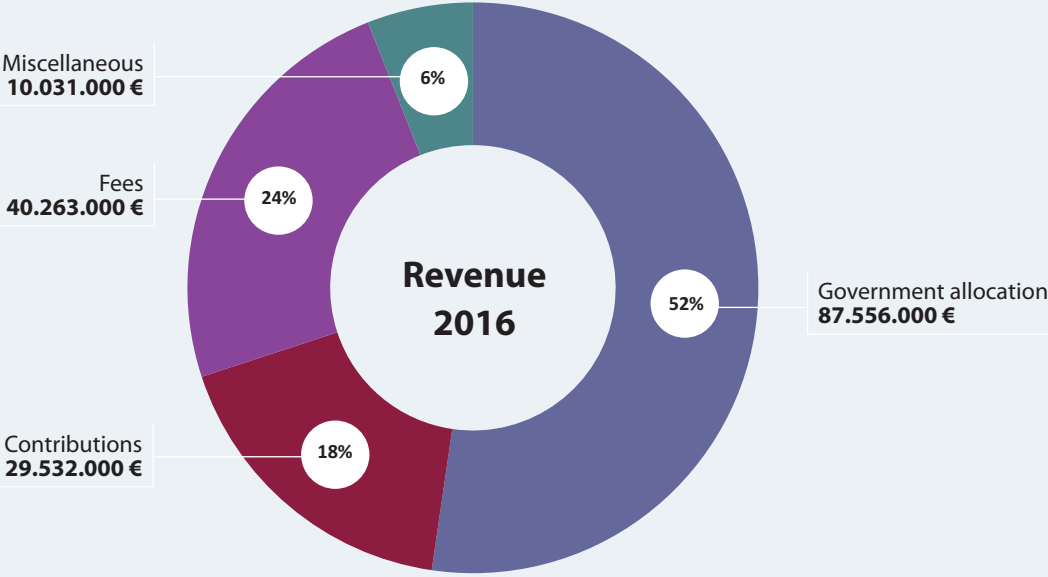
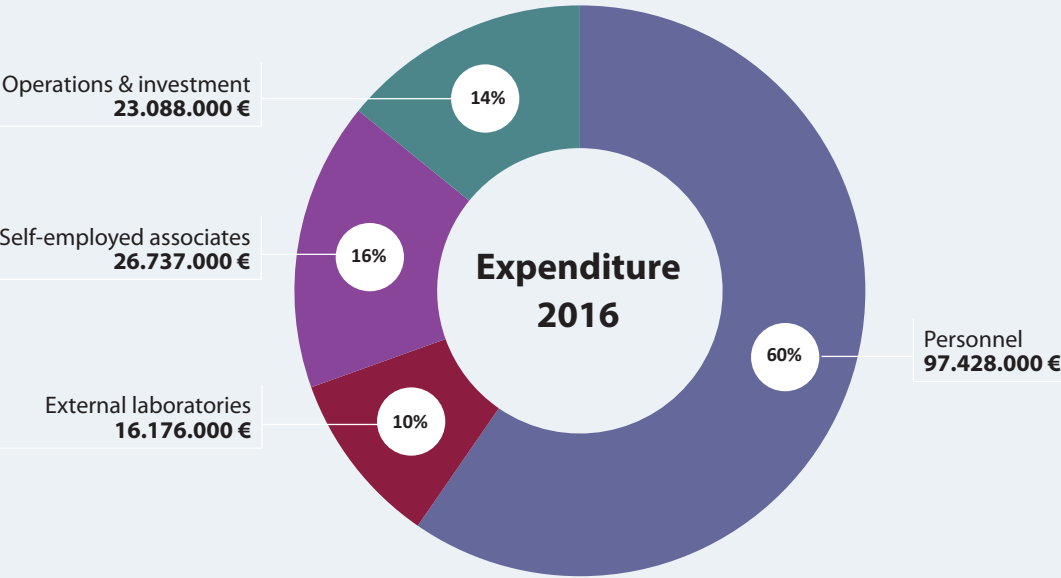
	Realizations 2014	Realizations 2015	Budget 2016	Realizations 2016
Personnel				
Wages and salaries	87.063.000 €	86.000.000 €	89.730.000 €	89.711.000 €
Other personnel costs	8.298.000 €	7.499.000 €	7.755.000 €	7.717.000 €
Operating costs				
Personnel-related operating costs	8.153.000 €	7.263.000 €	7.209.000 €	7.143.000 €
ICT	7.240.000 €	6.363.000 €	6.128.000 €	6.116.000 €
Services rendered by external associates	26.249.000 €	28.269.000 €	26.737.000 €	26.737.000 €
External laboratories	17.549.000 €	15.892.000 €	16.182.000 €	16.176.000 €
Other operating costs	9.426.000 €	11.138.000 €	8.277.000 €	7.542.000 €
Investments				
Equipment, furniture, ICT	2.863.000 €	1.598.000 €	2.427.000 €	2.287.000 €
Total expenditure	166.841.000 €	164.022.000 €	164.445.000 €	163.429.000 €

Recettes

	Realizations 2014	Realizations 2015	Budget 2016	Realizations 2016
Government allocation	107.775.000 €	95.102.000 €	87.556.000 €	87.556.000 €
Interdepartmental procurement	389.000 €	2.958.000 €	184.000 €	184.000 €
Staff FPS Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment	0 €	0 €	6.001.000 €	5.776.000 €
Contributions	31.296.000 €	30.875.000 €	27.100.000 €	29.532.000 €
Fees	38.884.000 €	39.487.000 €	38.568.000 €	40.263.000 €
Miscellaneous	6.857.000 €	3.005.000 €	6.024.000 €	4.071.000 €
Total revenue	185.201.000 €	171.427.000 €	165.433.000 €	167.382.000 €

Moreover, the FASFC's government allocation for 2016 was reduced by € 5.776 million corresponding to staff credits and associated overheads for the staff of the FPS Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment working on the funds.

However, the FASFC recovers from the funds the equivalent credit through other income.



1.3. Business plan 2015 - 2017

The preservation of the core business, policy continuity with a focus on the protection of consumers and well-meaning and well-performing operators, a cautious evolution towards an even better organization in budgetary difficult times. These are the main objectives of the Agency's business plan for 2015-2017.

Strategic and operational objectives and their corresponding KPIs are formulated based on a clear vision, mission and values.



The business plan for the period 2015-2017 is centred around 5 strategic themes:

1.	An efficient organization of food chain monitoring with a view to ensuring the highest possible level of food safety
2.	An appropriate regulatory framework and supporting measures to improve food chain safety,
3.	An agency accepted by the operators and which is recognized by society as a whole and by consumers
4.	An optimal level of services rendered to companies regarding food chain safety and to governments concerning delegated tasks.
5.	Optimal organizational management.

The Agency continues to properly implement its inspection and analysis programmes which are based on risk analyses and supported by a policy aimed at high quality inspections and a maximum number of operators obtaining favourable inspection results. Administrative simplification, attention to the specific situation of self-employed workers, micro-enterprises and small and medium enterprises, providing all the necessary tools and communicating clearly are also part and parcel of this policy. The Agency will continue to be very understanding towards operators with good intentions, but it will adopt a hard-line enforcement policy towards obstinate or fraudulent operators.

The significant savings imposed to all public services also have an impact on the Agency's operations. A reduction of staff members and operating grants will inevitably entail that choices will have to be made in consultation with the stakeholders with regard to actions and activities. However, the inspection and analyses programme will be safeguarded as much as possible. Also the activities covered by the Agency's own revenue will continue.

Consulting with all of the stakeholders is considered of paramount importance, but in the end the Agency remains responsible for the policy pursued in the context of European and national regulations. The FASFC is striving towards complete transparency by publicly reporting on its activities, using the food safety, animal health and plant health barometers as overall indicators.

Also when it comes to export, the FASFC continues to make substantial efforts. However, these efforts can only lead to results if they are embedded in a global policy established by the different public services concerned - federal as well as regional - and in consultation with the sector organizations.

A considerable range of tasks is entrusted to third parties. Institutions such as CODA-CERVA, DGZ and ARSIA, as well as the collaborators on assignment will also continue to be crucial partners. The FASFC will continue to pursue fruitful partnerships with first line veterinary practitioners.

Quality and effectiveness still remain the core of our approach. The FASFC retains its certified quality systems and continuously assesses its processes to find opportunities for improvement regarding efficiency, internal control and risk management.

As in many organizations, the staff's motivation and competencies are the Agency's most valuable resource. In the years to come, the FASFC wants to remain an excellent employer, despite the budgetary measures.



1.4. FASFC values

The business plan 2015-2017 places special emphasis on the development of the Agency's values. Together with the FASFC's mission statement and its vision, these values determine the Agency's *modus operandi*.



Professionalism

The FASFC is a dynamic organization with a committed workforce. We carry out our mission in an efficient, qualitatively outstanding and targeted manner which meets the needs and expectations of our clients. Exchange of knowledge and permanent training guarantee our expertise.

Trustworthy

We create a positive environment in which opportunities are given and everyone takes their responsibility. The focus is on loyalty and a constructive cooperation beyond borders.

Respect

Respect for man and the environment is central to everything we do. We listen, are understanding and act in a humane manner. We use our resources in a sustainable and efficient way.

Open

Our communication is timely, customized, clear and transparent. We engage in constructive dialogue and pay attention to all interlocutors. We encourage participation and are open to the ideas of others.

Equitable

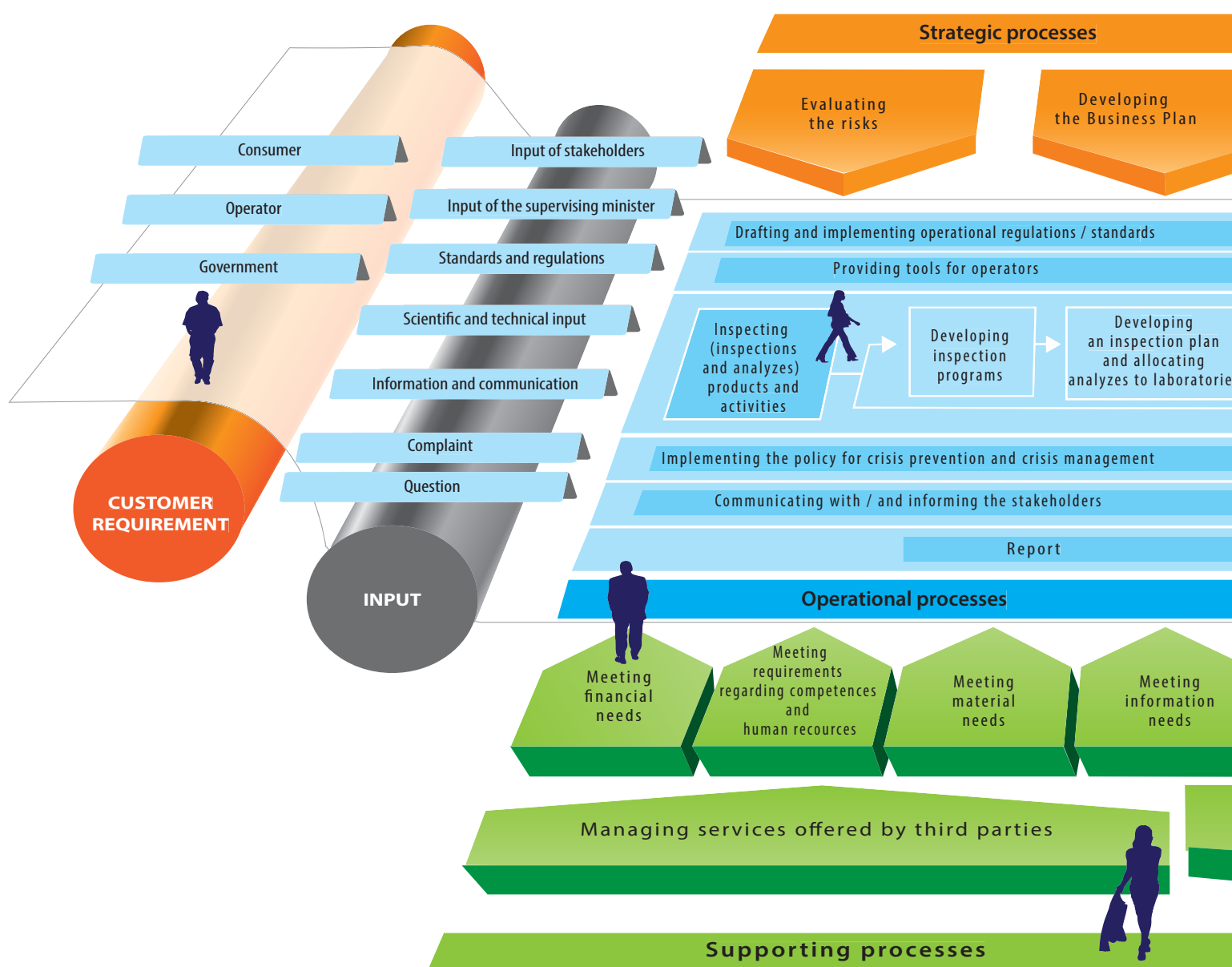
We are fair and reasonable. Our actions and decisions are proportional and acceptable.

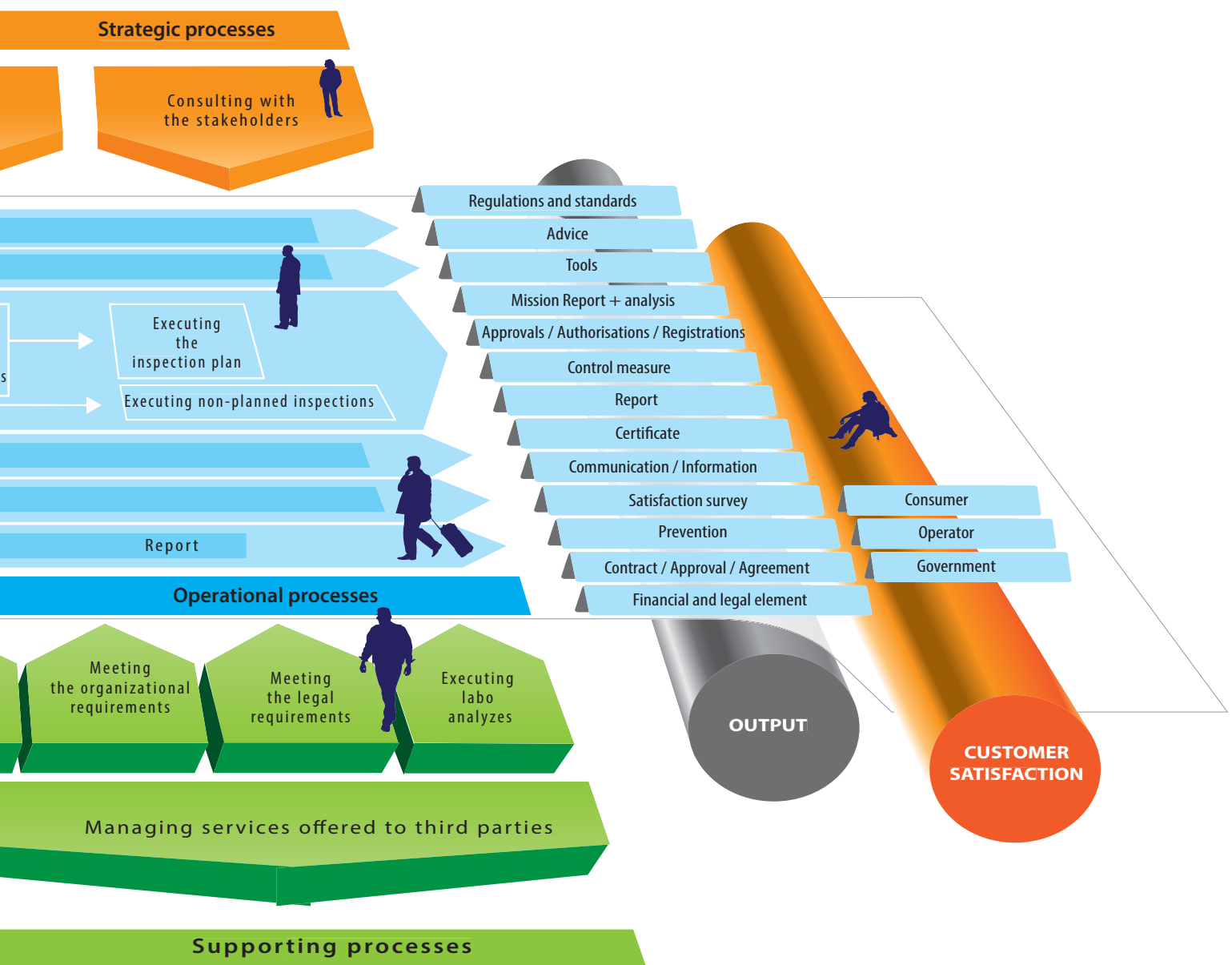


Integrity

We act in accordance with our values. We are honest, correct and treat confidential information with discretion. We provide services in a reliable and conscientious manner.

1.5. The FASFC's process model





1.6. Administrative simplification

The FASFC strives to keep the regulations and the ensuing obligations as simple and accessible as possible. That is why a lot of efforts are being made, not only in terms of information provision and awareness creation, but also with regard to legislation and procedures.

Administrative simplification plays a key role in the business plans for the periods 2009-2011, 2012-2014 and 2015-2017. So far, the following streamlining measures have been taken:

Flexibility regarding self-checking in the B2C-sector.

The FASFC attaches great importance to small enterprises. In this respect, small enterprises benefit from a considerable amount of flexibility regarding self-checking requirements. A few important achievements are the following:

- The Agency has completely taken over the management of the guides for the B2C-sector, which enables it to update and print the guides itself. In addition, these guides are made available to the operators free of charge on the Agency's website. In 2016, the generic self-checking guide for the B2C sector was published. This generic self-checking guide consists of a generic practical manual that applies to all operators in the B2C sector, and specific modules that are applicable depending on the operator's activity(ies).
- Quick start files were drawn up as a complement to the self-checking guides in the B2C-sector to clearly and unambiguously explain the most important points an operator has to take into account to meet legal requirements. New files are added as soon as the new legislation enters into force.
- 2016 saw the start of a website that is specifically tailored to operators active in the B2C sector. New operators are given particular attention. The website will be structured in such a way that all information is accessible in a clear and simple way.
- In determining the contribution applicable to operators, several activities were neutralized to prevent self-checking systems which are not validated (yet) from having an influence on the contribution. This measure, for example, pertains to new activities during the first year, certain activities which were not included yet in certain guides, activities which only require registration in the hotel and catering sector, the retail sector...
- The possibility to replace an administrative fine with a validation of the self-checking system.
- The European Food Information to Consumer regulations allows exceptions to the labelling for packaged foodstuffs intended for immediate sale and foodstuffs sold by small producers of which the nutritional information doesn't have to be stated on the label.
The mention of allergens remains obligatory in all cases. In order to clarify these concepts and to ensure that the operators interpret them uniformly and the authorities apply the regulations adequately, the FASFC has collaborated with the FPS Public Health and the FPS Economy to draft an explanatory document.
- The «direct supply by the manufacturer of small amounts of primary products to the final user or to local retail businesses which deliver directly to the final consumer» is subject to lenient legal requirements (RD of 7 January 2014). For the direct sale of raw milk for example, whether or not through milk vending machines on the production premises, the registration of this activity suffices.
- Belgium accepts a lowered analysis frequency (cell count, bacteriological count, antibiotics residues) for small-scale suppliers.
- A number of operators in the retail business are exempt from the compulsory approval, provided that they supply products of animal origin to other retail businesses and the activity remains marginal, local and limited.

- European regulations allow Member States to grant their approval to use milk with an excessive bacteriological count for the production of cheese with a maturation period of more than 60 days. Belgium has allowed this derogation by virtue of the Royal Decree of 30 November 2015 concerning the hygiene of foodstuffs of animal origin.
- The flexibility concerning HACCP in Belgium is laid down in the Ministerial Decree of 22 March 2013 on the flexibility of measures for the implementation of self-checking and traceability in certain food chain establishments. Operators do not have to conduct risk analyses themselves and can immediately apply the self-checking guide. Moreover, in this respect only the non-compliant corrective actions and measures have to be registered. The traceability documents only have to be kept for 6 months after the product's expiration date or, in case the expiration date is absent, for 6 months beyond the production date instead of 2 years.
- The B2C sector may limit the number of registrations pertaining to self-checking. Registration is no longer required for cleaning and disinfection, pest control, trainings and complaints. Declarations of compliance are no longer required for materials that come into contact with foodstuffs and production files no longer have to be kept or drawn up for foodstuffs that are delivered directly to the consumer.
- European Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 imposes a minimal sampling frequency for minced meat, meat preparations, mechanically separated meat and fresh poultry meat. The responsible authorities can exempt establishments that only produce small quantities of meat, meat preparations and fresh poultry meat from these sampling frequencies. In Belgium, the FASFC considers each meat retail business (a meat store, a butcher's shop) as an establishment that produces only small quantities of minced meat and meat preparations. The sampling frequency for these businesses was reduced to 1 analysis per year.

Development of an interactive portal for the public and the operators

The Foodweb portal site allows the public to view the registration of operators and the results of inspections in the businesses belonging to the distribution and the hotel and catering sector.

Operators can, through secure access, consult their administrative information regarding their registration at the FASFC, change their business activities, consult their inspection checklists, the analysis results, their self-checking status, invoices to be downloaded and their financial status vis-à-vis the FASFC, enter their annual declaration for contributions, consult ad-hoc documentation, as well as previous annual declarations. Operators are invited to submit and validate their email address (33% of operators in question in 2016) and to choose to receive their invoices by e-mail.

Via the BECERT application, operators can also apply for their electronic certificates. Since 2016, BECERT has been operational in all provinces and at the end of 2016, 22 models of electronic export certificates were already in use. In 2016, 2,005 certificates were issued in that manner. The use of the application will be further promoted in 2017. In addition, the application will be further extended in 2017 with additional models of electronic export certificates.

Also in its daily activities, the Agency's staff ensures administrative simplification and operator satisfaction.

1.7. Quality, safety, environment and internal control

In 2016, the FASFC continued to strengthen its integrated quality, safety, environmental and internal audit system, while retaining what had been achieved and continuing to develop more powerful new tools.

The renewal of the ISO 9001 certification, including the successful transition to the new version of the standard published in September 2015, has helped to implement the process and risk management approach in view of the important place awarded to those issues in the standard. This orientation further enhances the existing synergy between quality and internal inspection.

Maintaining the ISO 17020 accreditation for the inspections and extending the ISO 17025 and ISO 17043 accreditations for the analyses mean that the Agency's high level of requirements can be kept in terms of the staff's performance and qualifications in those core areas for the implementation of the FASFC's mission. These accreditations also offer objective assurances about the quality of the operation of the FASFC, they guarantee the trust of consumers, operators, government and other stakeholders, in Belgium or abroad.

In the context of internal inspection and, more specifically, the values of the FASFC, a new procedure for the management of internal fraud reports has been developed by a multidisciplinary group. Generic risk analyses on psychosocial well-being and on stress among middle management were conducted in the laboratories in 2016.

The FASFC's environmental management was maintained in 2016 after the EMAS registration was stopped in 2015 to maximize the use of the resources:

- Compliance with environmental legislation and the implementation of environmental objectives are in line with expectations according to an evaluation in June 2016.
- A multidisciplinary working group has developed a common method and tool for collecting, storing and making available official documents (certificates, etc.) required under the legal requirements related to the environment and safety for all sites used by the FASFC.

1.8. Internal audit

From a methodological point of view, the internal audit is an impartial assessment of the Agency's operations, which provides the management with the guarantee that its activities are being managed efficiently. Another important objective, from an organizational as well as from a technical point of view, is to offer possibilities for improvement.

Both the European Union (Regulation (EC) n° 882/2004) and the national government (Royal Decree of 17 August 2007 concerning the internal audit activities in some services of the federal executive power) demand that internal audits be carried out. This also constitutes a strictly necessary step for the validation (certification or accreditation) of the quality management systems the FASFC uses (ISO 9001, ISO 17020, ISO 17025 and ISO 17043).

The internal audits are included in the multi-annual audit programme which is based on a risk analysis centred around 2 pillars:

- an audit universe of the ongoing processes in the FASFC (47 items);
- a sectoral audit universe based on Regulation 882/2004 and the Agency's business plan (40 items).

The audit programme for 2016 was distilled from the multi-annual planning for 2014-2016 and also takes into account:

- the audit universe as laid down in the European legislation;
- the execution of two central follow-up audits;
- second party audits conducted by external partners: tasks and responsibilities that fall under the Agency's competence are assigned to these audit bodies.

In 2016, a total of 20 internal audits were conducted by the Internal Audit Unit and 18 by the Auditors of DG Laboratories. The audit results can be found in the full annual report on our website.

1.9. External audits

Audit by the European Commission

In 2016, like every year, the Directorate responsible for audits and analyses of health and food of the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety conducted a series of audits in Belgium. The Directorate conducts these audits in accordance with Article 45 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004 on official controls.

In 2016, 2 audits and 3 information missions took place:

- an audit on the national audit systems (internal audit) established by the Belgian government,
- an audit to evaluate the systems that were introduced for enhanced import inspections,
- an information mission on the restrictive measures imposed for *Campylobacter* spp. in poultry farms,
- an information mission on setting the requirements that apply to representatives of third-country institutions that export animal feed to the European Union,
- an information mission on official inspections on composite products.

Inspections and audits by third countries (non-EU countries)

The FASFC is also regularly audited by third countries with a view to preserving and expanding Belgium's export markets.

In 2016, delegations from Canada, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan and China checked the Belgian food safety system.

1.10. International profile

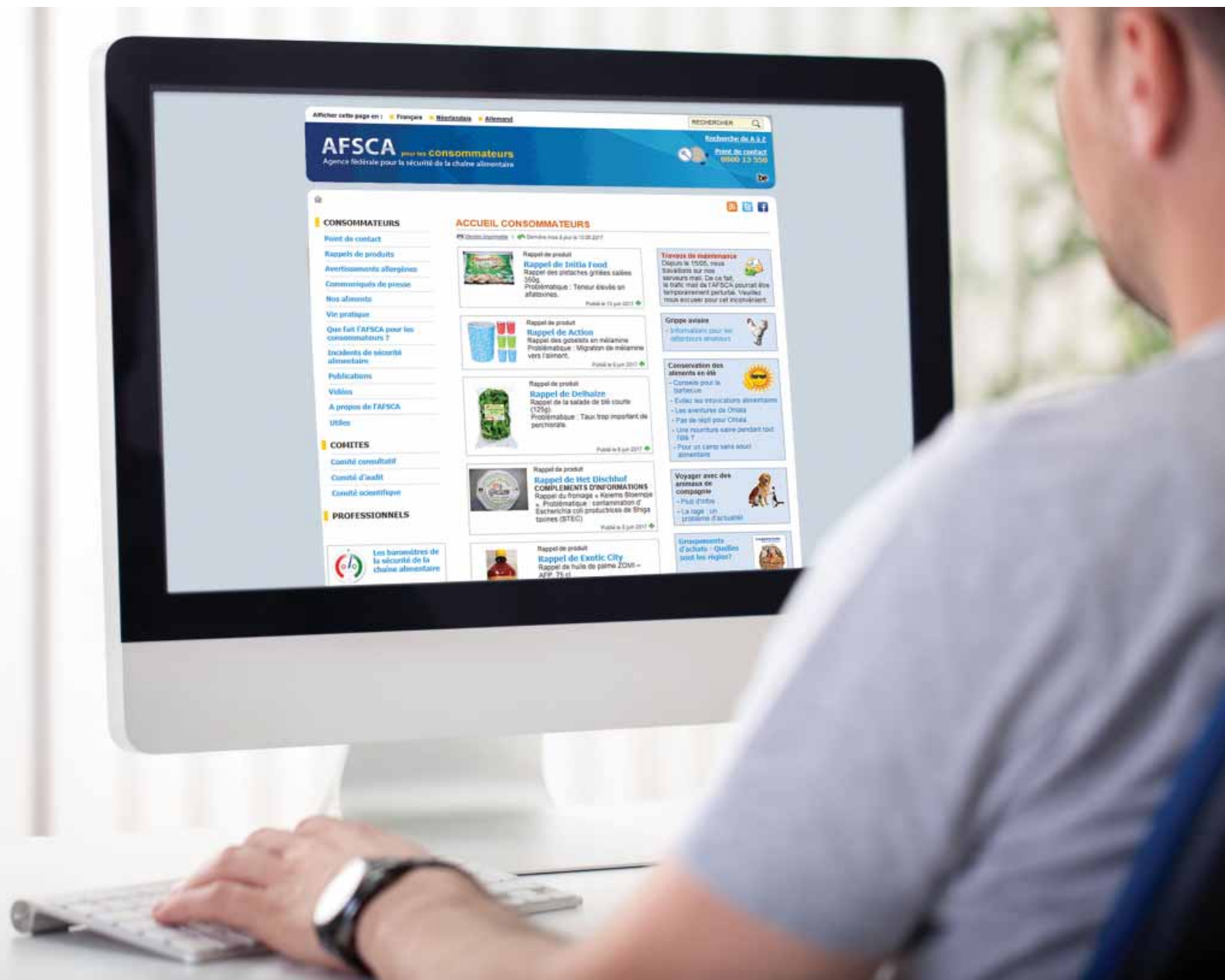
The FASFC is active internationally and has a network at its disposal which enables it to help shape European and international policies, ensure the image of Belgian products and thereby facilitate the export of Belgian products. The Agency is considered a highly performing authority which serves as an international example.

In 2016, the FASFC hosted 21 foreign delegations. During these delegations, the working methods and the missions of the FASFC were explained. In some cases, the goal was to open up new markets. In other cases, they were information visits to gain an insight into the organization of the FASFC.



The FASFC at the service of consumers and professionals

2



The consumer remains at the centre of the Agency's policy. The inspection programmes are aimed at keeping the risks for consumers to a minimum in the stage that precedes the purchase.

Once the consumer has purchased the food, he or she takes on part of the responsibility. Therefore, it is important that consumers are informed about and made aware of all food safety aspects.

For several years now, the FASFC has been taking several initiatives to train and guide professionals in order to improve food safety and hygiene conditions. Prevention, awareness creation and the provision of information are the Agency's most important objectives.

Communication figures








		2014	2015	2016
Press releases (including recalls of products and allergen warnings)		124 (50%)	132 (63%)	126 (64%)
Visits: www.afsca.be		1.080.544	1.360.599	1.149.621
Consumer Newsletter	Publications	4	3	4
	Subscribers	12.081	12.461	12.165
Contact Point	Questions	4.666	5.907	6.987
	Complaints	4.437	3.772	3.652
Information Service	Sessions	316	337	338
	Participants	9.630	9.840	8.364
Brochures	Publications	8	9	16
Newsletters for veterinarians	Subscribers	7.774	7.776	6.533
	Publications	45	17	39
Newsletters	Subscribers	3.078	3.733	4.458
	Publications	518	420	477
Mediation Department	Complaints	100	89	94
Advisory Committee	Members	39	39	36
	Plenary sessions	8	8	8
Facebook	Subscribers	2.272	4.114	5.266
	Published messages	122	122	130
Twitter	Subscribers	812	1.107	1.451
	Published messages	122	120	130

2.1. Publication of the inspection results

At the end of the first semester of 2015, the FASFC started publishing the inspection results in the B2C-sector (business-to-consumer) on its website in the form of a simple scoring system. By doing so, the FASFC wants to meet the obligations concerning openness of government and at the same time offer a transparent system which provides consumers with comprehensible information on the hygienic and food safety conditions of food business operators in the distribution sector.

FASFC inspections are carried out based on standardized checklists. These checklists allow for harmonized and transparent checks. These checklists are mainly technical documents which were developed to conduct efficient inspections.

Consequently, these documents are not easily understood by a layperson. For this reason the Agency believes that publishing completed inspection checklists is not the best way to inform consumers. Consequently, the Agency has chosen to use an alternative publication method based on a score system which, in a simple manner, provides a general overview of the results by means of a global score. This score not only takes into account the basic inspections, but also factors in the gravity of the observed non-compliances and the actions taken by the food business operator to remedy the non-compliances. This system was developed in close consultation with the sector organizations, as well as with the consumer organizations and all of the other actors of the Agency's Advisory Committee.

SYMBOL visible in Foodweb		MEANING
Excellent		The operator has a Smiley or a certified self-checking system for all of his B2C activities.
Very good		During the last inspection or audit conducted by the FASFC (for all B2C activities), the operator obtained the result "favourable" or "favourable with remarks".
Good		During the last inspection the operator obtained an "unfavourable" result, but during a follow-up inspection he or she was able to show that the problems identified were solved. During the follow-up inspection, the operator consequently obtained the result "favourable" or "favourable with remarks".
Sufficient Preliminary assessment pending a follow-up inspection		During the last inspection, the operator obtained an unfavourable result and received a warning. He/she is waiting for a follow-up inspection.
To be improved Preliminary assessment pending a follow-up inspection		During the last inspection, the operator obtained an "unfavourable result" and received a procès-verbal (PV). He/ she is waiting for a follow-up inspection.
To be improved		During the last inspection, the operator obtained an «unfavourable» result and during the follow-up inspection, he or she was not able to prove that the problems identified were solved. The operator thus obtained the result «unfavourable» for the follow-up inspection and consequently obtained a PV (an official report).
No recent inspection		The operator has never been inspected before OR was inspected for the first time and obtained an unfavourable result. The operator is either awaiting a follow-up inspection OR the last inspection predates the basic inspection frequency established by the FASFC.

In 2016, some changes were made to the system for the publication of inspection results. For example, extensive information was provided in FoodWeb about the meaning of the symbols used. In addition, a number of changes have been introduced for the benefit of the operators. Since the system's introduction, they can now consult a history of their published results in Foodweb, and thus follow the evolution of their results in a simple manner. Since early 2017, operators can also print their authorization or registration posters. They can choose to print their authorization or registration with or without the inspection result. If the operator chooses to print his authorization or registration with the inspection result, he undertakes to keep the poster up-to-date and, therefore, replace it when the inspection result changes. There is no obligation to post the inspection result.

Additionally, the FASFC ensures the availability of detailed results concerning the latest inspections and analyses conducted at the premises of food business operators. These results only pertain to reports on official inspections and analyses in the framework of the Agency's control plan. The person who requests this information will be invited to the FASFC's central administration after filling out a request form that is available on the Agency's website. At the central administration, this person will get the opportunity to look up the results in the database and obtain a transcript thereof.

2.2. Contact point for consumers

The FASFC contact point is intended for consumers. Every year, the contact point handles thousands of questions and complaints.



In 2016, the contact point has received 3.652 complaints, which is a 3,2 % decrease compared to 2015. While in 2015, a sharp decrease in the number of complaints was established in relation to the previous year, this difference is less pronounced in 2016. In 2016, there was not a single change in the FASFC's responsibilities, while this was the case in 2015 (cf. Shift in animal welfare responsibilities as of 2015).

However, the number of smokers' complaints has decreased again.

The complaints predominantly pertain to the hygiene of premises and people (1.073 complaints), possible food poisoning (892) and production and conservation methods of foodstuffs (951). Each complaint leads to an investigation by a Local Control Unit (LCU).

2.3. Consumer newsletter

In 2016, the FASFC has published 4 consumer newsletters. These newsletters deal with current topics and food safety-related issues and were sent to 12.165 subscribers. The newsletters are also published on our consumer website.

2.4. Targeted checks

Each year, unannounced targeted checks are organized in the distribution sector. These checks take place nation-wide and are not announced in advance.

In 2016, 4 targeted actions were organized.

‘Fruit Juice’ campaign

During this campaign, freshly squeezed fruit juice for immediate consumption, which is sold in retail and catering businesses, was sampled and analyzed for microbiological quality and residues of plant protection products. None of the 110 samples contained residues of plant protection products above the permitted limits or pathogenic bacteria. However, 86% of the analyzed fruit juices contained traces of one or more residues. The most frequently detected residues were derived from authorized fungicides used on citrus fruits after harvest to ensure their shelf life.

In 23% of the samples, levels of yeast and fungi were found above a limit that the FASFC considers acceptable. Excessive levels of yeast and fungi are signs of decay, which leads to aberrant odour and taste. The operators concerned were required to take the necessary measures.

‘Acrylamide’ campaign

In this campaign, the acrylamide content in foods was evaluated on the basis of cereals. A total of 70 samples of crackers, toast, biscuits, breakfast cereals and baby food were sampled. About half (52%) of the samples did not contain acrylamide or the acrylamide content was lower than the quantification limit.

The results of the 4 samples of biscuits were above the campaign limits; this is with due consideration for the measurement uncertainty. For non-compliant samples, the operator concerned was asked to take the necessary measures to reduce the acrylamide content.

Acrylamide is formed during the baking or frying process of foods rich in starch, such as crisps, chips, biscuits, crackers, gingerbread, breakfast cereals, toast, bread and pizza. This substance is carcinogenic in experimental animals. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that acrylamide is carcinogenic in humans. However, the EFSA experts believe that acrylamide in foodstuffs could increase the risk of cancer. That is why the Food Agency has been following acrylamide levels in sensitive products for years.

‘Broiler Chickens’ campaign

In the framework of this campaign, the FASFC has analyzed 110 broiler chicken samples in itinerant businesses in the country's different provinces. Microbiological analyses were conducted on these samples. The objective of these analyses was to detect germs (Salmonella, Campylobacter, Clostridium perfringens ...) that may be dangerous to consumers and to check hygiene parameters. The purpose of this hygiene check is to make sure that the operators properly handle the food they place on the market.

Since all the samples complied with the applicable standards, the competent authority was not required to take any action regarding the operators or their products.

Campaign 'Foodstuffs to be heated in the microwave in their packaging'.

The Agency has also carried out a series of inspections on prepackaged foodstuffs. The instructions for use of these foodstuffs indicate on the label that the product for consumption can be heated directly in the packaging in the microwave oven. The analyses carried out in the laboratory were designed to ensure that no residues from the packaging are released in the food during the heating process that exceed the legal limits. A total of 110 samples were taken in which four parameters were checked each time, which adds up to 440 analyses. No non-compliant results were found.

2.5. Company Discovery Day

For more than 20 years now, a Company Discovery Day is held all over Belgium on the first Sunday of October. The Agency has already participated in this event for four years in a row. In 2016, an interactive Food Safety Tour was organized at the FASFC laboratory in Wandre. Approximately 600 people visited the laboratory.

During this open day, visitors were given the opportunity to discover the work of our laboratories, including the Wandre laboratory: What analyses are performed, why and how? Belgians love their chips, and thus it was shown how the quality of frying oil is analyzed.

The visitors were also given the opportunity to find out what the Food Agency's inspectors do. How is a fishmonger, a school canteen, a supermarket or a snack bar inspected? All this was explained by means of concrete examples.

Among the other topics discussed were import inspections, inspections by means of nutritional value labelling, contact materials, plant protection products, inspections on the presence of histamine in food or sulphite in minced meat.

Did you know that foods can be withdrawn from the market and recalled (on the consumer level) because of an excessive level of aflatoxin? The importance of these analyses for public health was explained.

Of course, questions could be asked directly on this opening day and there was a quiz that tested the visitors' knowledge about food safety.

The press was also invited to take part.



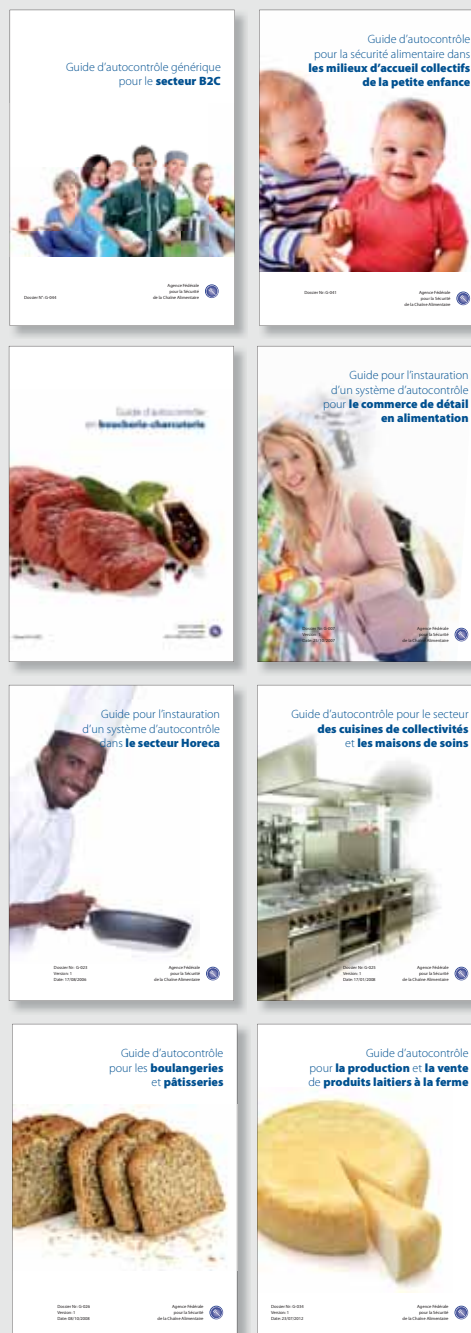
2.6. Self-checking systems and sector guides

Since 2005, all food business operators have to implement a self-checking system in their establishment in order to provide better protection to consumers. In order to help operators meet this requirement the professional organizations draw up self-checking guides which have to be validated by the FASFC.

The FASFC has been encouraging sector organizations for several years to develop clear and didactic guides, which has now resulted in 34 approved sector guides. In 2016, the revision of 5 guides was approved.

Moreover, the FASFC, in consultation with all interested parties, has drawn up the Generic Self-Checking Guide for the B2C sector and made it available to the operators concerned via the website. This initiative allows a B2C sector operator to rely on one single guide to cover all their B2C activities.

In order to facilitate the implementation of self-checking in businesses, relaxations were provided. These relaxations allow establishments to implement the HACCP procedures described in the guide, so that they will no longer have to conduct their own risk analyses. This largely facilitates the implementation of self-checking in small businesses with low staff levels and little scientific expertise (<http://www.favv-afscs.fgov.be/autocontrôle-fr/assouplissements/>).



Self-checking guides for businesses that sell directly to the consumer (B2C) are managed by the FASFC, drawn up in consultation with the sectors concerned, printed and published on its website. <http://www.favv-afscs.fgov.be/autocontrôle-fr/guides/distribution/>.

They were complemented with quick start files. <http://www.afsca.be/autocontrôle-fr/guides/qsfiches/>

In 2014, the FASFC has introduced a procedure that makes it possible for private system owners to demonstrate equivalence with the guides. Equivalence means that in case of a favourable audit based on the equivalent system no additional audit is required based on the relevant guide, but that the audited business can still benefit from a bonus on its contribution to the FASFC and a reduction of the inspection frequency. In previous years, it had already been established that respectively the Vegaplan Standard and the Sectoral Guide for primary production, as well as the FCA standard (Feed Chain Alliance, previously GMP feed) and the self-checking guide on feedstuffs are equivalent. In 2016, this equivalence was also established for the Vegaplan Standard for Agricultural and Horticultural Contractors and the self-checking guide for the Agricultural and Horticultural Contractors for the Primary Vegetable Production.

More details on the relevant versions that are equivalent can be found on the website.

(<http://www.afsca.be/autocontrole-fr/equivalence/>).

Operators who have had their self-checking system validated enjoy a reduction in the inspection frequency by the FASFC and a 75% discount on their annual contribution.

The audits are based on the approved self-checking guides and are performed using checklists drawn up by the FASFC in consultation with representatives of the professional associations concerned. In 2015, the specific checklists that were applicable in the B2C were replaced by one generic checklist, which represented a considerable simplification for all parties involved. For some activities not yet covered by a guide (a guide is available for more than 99% of the operators), the FASFC has developed specific tools to help the businesses.

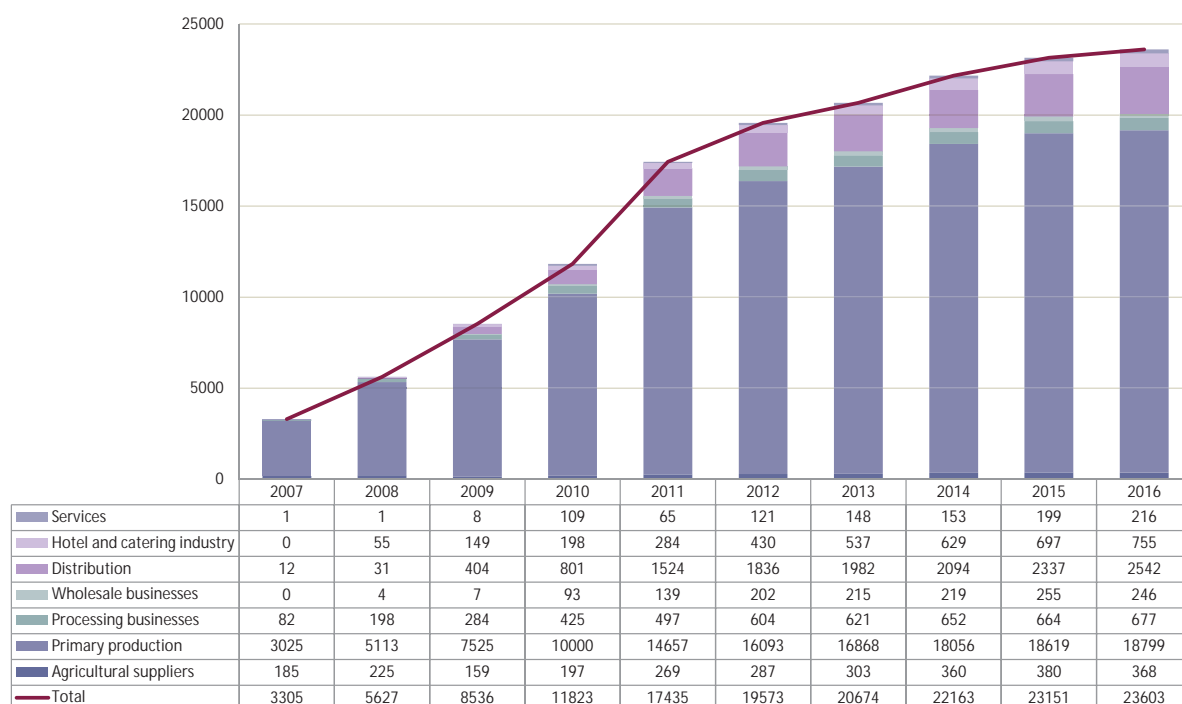
In the sectors for which a guide is available, audits may be conducted by the FASFC, but generally, they are carried out by one of the 14 accredited and recognized certification bodies. Since 2016, 7 recognized certification bodies have now also been recognized for conducting audits based on the generic self-checking guide for the B2C sector.

Based on private tender specifications, these certification bodies (OCIs) can conduct audits simultaneously with the self-checking validation audits. These «combined audits» allow for a reduction of costs.

The number of businesses that had their self-checking system validated continues to increase. This testifies to the effectiveness of the policy in place.

By the end of 2016, 23,603 establishments had a validated self-checking system covering all of their activities.

Just like last year, most validations can be found in the primary production sector, followed by the distribution sector.





In 2012, the FASFC Smiley, which up to that point was only intended for restaurants and institutional kitchens, was extended to all establishments in the B2C sector that have a validated self-checking system. By the end of 2012, 1.262 business units displayed a FASFC smiley. By the end of 2016, this number has risen to 3.219. The smiley is awarded by the OCI that conducts the audit and is valid for 3 years. The list of businesses that have a smiley can be consulted on the website: <http://www.afsca.be/smileys>.

These initiatives taken by the FASFC to help companies set up their self-checking systems and also promote the validation thereof, aim to improve the results of the inspections and reduce non-conformities thanks to increased awareness among the operators of their impact on the safety of the food chain. This policy is aimed at ensuring that food on the consumer's plate becomes increasingly safe.

2.7. Consultation

The Agency's Advisory Committee issues opinions on all issues pertaining to policies adopted or 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 also acts as a consultative platform for the FASFC and its partners, where fully transparent discussions can be held on current affairs, the evolution of regulations, funding, export impediments,... 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 (World organisation for Animal Health). Technical consultation meetings between every professional sector and the services of the FASFC's DG Control Policy are also held multiple times per year.

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

2.8. Training and guidance of professionals

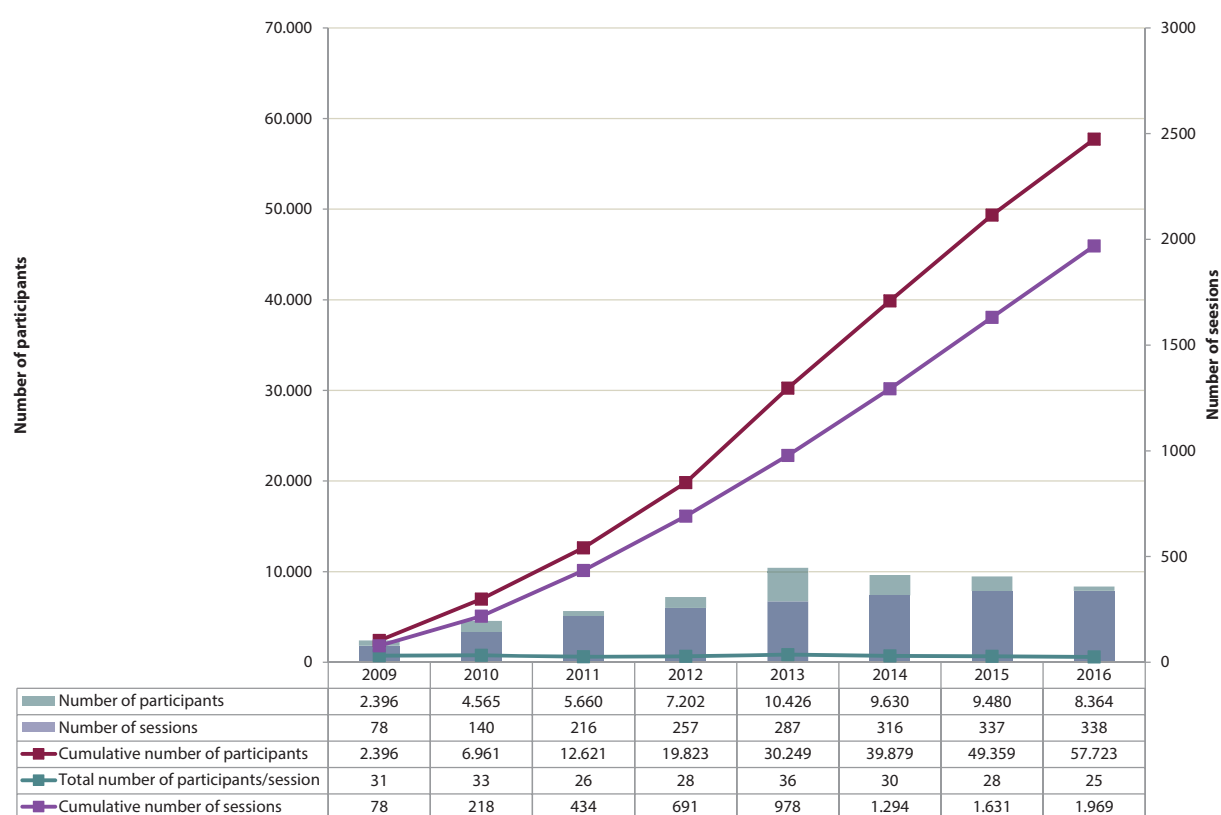
A number of initiatives are listed below that are aimed at encouraging operators to follow trainings and obtain information.

- The checklists used during inspections are published on the Agency's website, which gives operators the opportunity to see exactly what an inspection is all about.
- Each year, the FASFC carries out about ten local announced inspections in the B2C sector. In the framework of these actions the FASFC, in collaboration with the municipalities concerned, always organizes preliminary training sessions to which all food business operators are invited.
- The FASFC's Information service organizes free trainings for groups of operators who deliver directly to consumers. More precisely, it focusses on small businesses that have difficulties understanding regulations.
- Since early 2011, hotel and catering industry operators have the opportunity to have their administrative fines dropped, provided that the entire staff of the establishment concerned attends a training session by the information service specifically organized for this purpose.
- Educational materials are made available to the operators free of charge: a syllabus, a film explaining how an inspection in the hotel and catering industry takes place, brochures targeted at specific sectors to inform operators and explain how an inspection takes place.
- The FASFC makes the self-checking guides available to the B2C sector free of charge in order to provide operators of this sector with the necessary information and to help them attain good hygienic practices and implement their own self-checking system. «Quick Start Files» are also made available.
- The checks carried out receive individual follow-up. In case of unfavourable checks, the sanctions depend on the importance of the non-compliances that were found: a warning, a procès-verbal (official report) of infringement accompanied by an administrative fine, (temporary) closure and/or seizure of non-compliant products and the launching of a procedure for suspension or withdrawal of the establishment's authorization or approval. Follow-up inspections are also carried out in order to verify whether operators who have received a sanction (PV, warning) and have taken action to comply with regulations continue to do so in the long run: a certain percentage of these operators (which differs according to the activities) is therefore checked prior to the next inspection that is to take place based on a predetermined inspection frequency.
- In order to produce food in a safe manner, legislation imposes all kinds of obligations on food producers. For small businesses and companies with limited production, it is not always easy to find their way in legislation and provide all means necessary to ensure food safety. That is why within the FASFC, a guidance service for small producers has now been established.

Information service

The FASFC's information service has been operational since 1/9/2008 and helps business operators who have direct contact with consumers (hotel

and catering industry, retail trade) to comply with regulations. To this end, the Agency organizes training sessions for groups of food business operators.



Training as an alternative for administrative fines

To improve the level of hygiene in the hotel and catering industry (restaurants, pita houses, chip shops, snack bars,...) the FASFC, in collaboration with the professional associations of the hotel and catering industry, since 1/1/2011, has been offering operators the opportunity to have their administrative fines dropped, provided that they attend a training organized by the FASFC's information service. This action only applies to the first fine and does not apply to fines concerning the smoking ban.

In 2016, 53 training sessions (52 in 2015) were organized for 1.082 participants (1.460 participants in 2015).

Guidance service

The guidance service has been operational since the recruitment of a coordinator in November 2016. The service supports and guides existing initiatives (e.g. initiatives from the regions, professional federations, guidance centres ...) by organizing work meetings, specific training, the publication of brochures ... In this way, the guidance service can help operators comply with legal food safety requirements.

The guidance service is also the point of contact for operators seeking information on food safety legislation. For direct contact with these small businesses and companies, the guidance service also takes part in various events and fairs specifically aimed at this target group.

2.9. Export support

Businesses are increasingly involved in export and expect government support in this respect. The increasing demand for opening export markets and the increasing importance of sanitary and phytosanitary obstacles in export require a proactive approach, more extensive cooperation between the different governments and the corporate world as well as an efficient use of available resources. On the European and the global level, governments and companies are faced with the same challenges.

Consequently, the FASFC has taken several actions that are geared towards improving the service provision to Belgian exporters. Among other things, the FASFC has taken the initiative to conclude agreements geared towards a common approach to promoting export in close consultation with all of the partners involved (companies, federal and regional administrations).

Specific sectoral sampling plans in the framework of the export to third countries

The requirements of third countries often differ from the prevailing European and national legislation. Exporters have to guarantee that they meet these requirements by means of their self-checking system. A few professional associations have drawn up a sectoral sampling plan to verify whether the products that are intended for export actually meet the product standards of the country of destination. These sampling plans are revised and validated annually by the Agency.

The Association of Belgian Horticultural Cooperatives (VBT) and the exporters of fruit and vegetables (Fresh Trade Belgium) have been using a sampling plan for several years now to prove that the products meet the Russian and Japanese requirements for pesticide residues. The Federation of Belgian Mixed Feed Producers (BEMEFA) has a sampling plan which contains certification guarantees for feed exported to Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Belgian Meat Federation (FEBEV), the Belgian Confederation of the Dairy Industry (BCZ-CBL) and the gelatin manufacturers also guarantee product conformity for the Russian and the Chinese market by means of a sectoral sampling plan.

BECERT

BECERT is an application aimed at digitalizing the certification process for the export to third countries (non-EU countries) in the framework of administrative simplification, traceability and fraud control.

Since 2016, BECERT has been operational in all provinces and the number of available certificates has increased: 22 models of certificates have been in production since the end of 2016.

BECERT provides for the possibility to:

- request, create, save, print and issue export certificates
- consult the export certificates that were issued,
- register all of the information pertaining to a specific certificate in one database,
- work in an ergonomic, safe and efficient way,
- by linking BECERT to other databases, by improving the quality of the data.

In a first stage, BECERT will be used to digitalize demands and to issue export certificates. In 2016, 2.005 certificates were issued. In a later stage, BECERT will also enable the electronic provision of certificate data to third countries.

Export Taskforce

The Food Agency took the initiative several years ago to bring together the main Belgian partners involved in the export of agri-food products. This allows for a joint approach towards opening up new export markets. Since the Russian embargo on agricultural products, the need for a joint approach has become even more pronounced and under the chairmanship of the FPS Foreign Affairs, a task force was set up to define alternative priority markets with all stakeholders and to use trade missions and state visits more effectively in the promotion of exports of Belgian agri-food products.

This task force is currently in its second phase. After identifying all Belgian partners at both federal and regional level and the agri-food chain players, the task force is now seeking to more clearly delineate everyone's tasks with a view to opening up new markets even more efficiently and in a more coordinated way.

2.10. Crisis prevention and crisis management

Preventing incidents in the food chain is one of the Agency's main concerns. Despite all of the efforts being made in this respect – by the government as well as by food business operators – reality shows that it is not possible to entirely prevent incidents in the food chain and outbreaks of certain animal and plant diseases. Consequently, the FASFC's crisis prevention policy is not entirely aimed at trying to prevent incidents. The Agency also pays a lot of attention to limiting the effects of incidents. The crisis prevention and crisis management department contributes to limiting these effects in several ways.

- Capture of signals: improving the capture of potential crisis signals is one of the projects which the FASFC is carrying out to keep the finger on the pulse. The signals intended here are elements of information that might predict an impending incident or a crisis. In this respect, it is important to capture and recognize these signals as soon as possible, so as to ensure an appropriate reaction. In the context of capturing signals, more attention is also paid to data profiling based on the many data available to the Agency.
- Simulation exercises: Simulation exercises are the best way to keep the Agency's expertise in incident management in the food chain up-to-date. Such expertise is not only important for the FASFC (training and exercises for the Agency's staff), but also for the operators.

- Cooperation with the Government Crisis Centre (CGCCR): within the federal framework, the CGCCR plays a pivotal role when it comes to emergency planning and crisis management. The FASFC relies a great deal on the Crisis Centre and the other structures that are provided for in the federal emergency plan (the governors, civil security, the police, etc.) to help manage major incidents in the food chain. The FASFC takes part in the exercises which the CGCCR organizes on a regular basis.
- Operational means: managing an incident or a crisis in the food chain sometimes requires special tools and equipment. Such tools create new avenues for crisis control or allow for a more efficient incident management. Depending on market opportunities, the FASFC either purchases this equipment or these tools or it concludes waiting contracts that ensure a guaranteed provision of the service or delivery of the equipment (for example: a contract for culling poultry, an antigen bank or a vaccine against animal diseases: foot-and-mouth disease, Q fever, etc.).

2.11. Mediation Department

The mediation service was founded in 2005 in the spirit of open government and is characterized by the complete impartiality of its decisions.

The mediation service handles all complaints pertaining to the functioning of the FASFC. This service offers a listening ear to all partners of the FASFC, in the first place to food business operators. The information obtained via these channels allows the Agency to continuously improve its work methods.

In 2016, the mediation service processed 94 complaints, more than half of which pertained to inspections conducted by the FASFC and the financing of these inspections (challenges to invoices contributions or fees). 87% of these complaints were handled within 2 months and less than 27% of the complaints were found to be partially or entirely justified.

If the analysis of the complaint points to a structural problem within the FASFC, the mediation service describes possible avenues for improvement, which are communicated to the Agency's management. In 2016, the Agency identified 3 items to be remedied, which will be monitored.

In 2016, the mediation department also received 116 requests for information mainly concerning the interpretation of Belgian and European regulations.



**Our core business:
Inspections**

3



Since it was founded in 2000, the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain has been conducting inspections in the entire food chain, from pitchfork to fork.

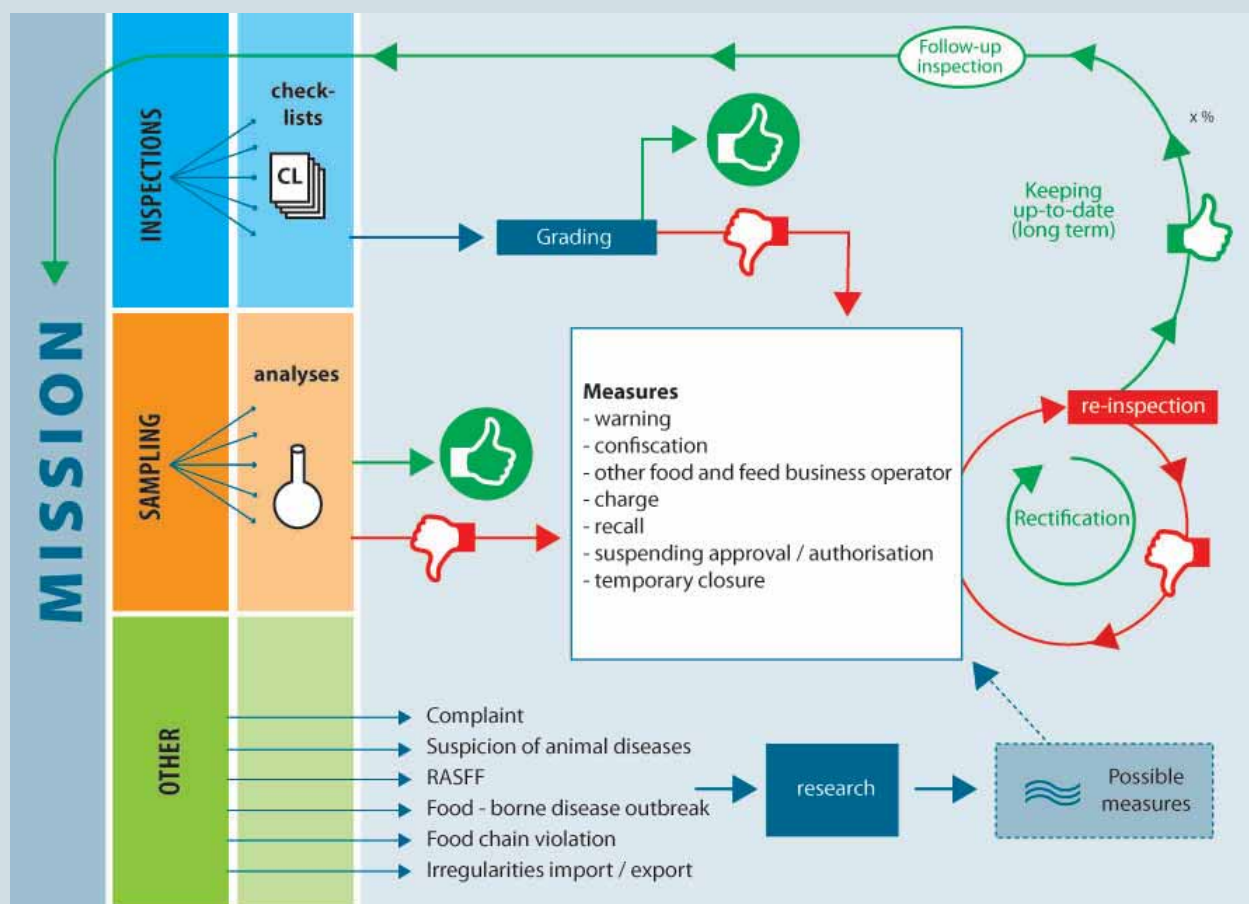
By now, most consumers, self-employed workers and businesses have heard of the FASFC, but the Agency's activities are less known. However, a lot of information is made available via the Agency's website.

MANCP

The FASFC draws up a multi-annual national integrated control plan (MANCP) in the framework of Regulation (EC) n° 882/2004. This plan describes the strategy and organization aimed at guaranteeing an efficient control of the entire food chain. In drawing up this plan, the Agency focuses on a high level of food chain safety by the efficient use of the available staff.

In addition to the FASFC, other instances are also involved in the MANCP, among which the FPS Public Health, the FAMHP (Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products), the Multidisciplinary hormones cell, the FANC (the Federal Agency for Nuclear Control), the Customs and Excise Department, the Regions and the FPS Economy, as well as various external inspection bodies. The validity period and the strategic and operational objectives of the MANCP are the same as those of the FASFC's business plan. The MANCP is available on <http://www.favv.be/about/mancp/>





Each business active in the food chain has to be registered at the FASFC and has to be inspected systematically by the Agency at a predetermined frequency: <http://www.favv.be/businessplan-en/2015-2017/>

If an inspector goes to a place of business to carry out an inspection, a sampling or a specific investigation assignment, this is referred to as a **mission**.

During an **inspection** the operator's activities are checked. The inspector uses a checklist (or multiple checklists) to objectively assess all of the items to be checked. Each item to be checked is given a certain weight. These checklists are available to the public and can be found on the Agency's website <http://www.favv.be/checklists-fr/>.

This way the operator knows well beforehand which items will be checked and which importance=weight will be assigned to each item to be inspected. In addition, they have other tools at their disposal, for example the brochure: «The way to a flawless FASFC inspection»: <http://www.favv.be/publicationsthematiques/en-route-vers-la-reussite-dun-controle.asp>

During an inspection samples can also be taken which are sent to a laboratory for analysis: **the sampling**.

It is also possible that an inspector visits a business on a **specific investigation assignment**, which is subsumed under the heading "miscellaneous" in the scheme, for example because of a European warning, collective food poisoning, an incident in the food chain, an irregularity during the import or export of a product or following a complaint submitted by a consumer.

The end result can either be **good = compliant** (favourable, with or without remarks), to everyone's satisfaction, or **not good = non-compliant** (unfavourable). In the latter case, measures must be taken. These measures can range from a warning to a PV (procès-verbal), seizure of a product or a temporary closure, as required by the situation and if the health of the consumers is being compromised. In case food business operators continue to be obstinate, a withdrawal of their approval or authorization may even be considered. Each less than favourable result is always followed by **re-inspection** paid for by the operator until everything is up-to-code.

In the long term, follow-up inspections are also carried out to make sure that the business remains compliant and does not return to its old ways. Measures are also taken in the case of non-compliant sampling results. For instance, if a product poses a risk to consumer health, all products of the same batch can be recalled or destroyed, the work method can be reassessed, and so on.

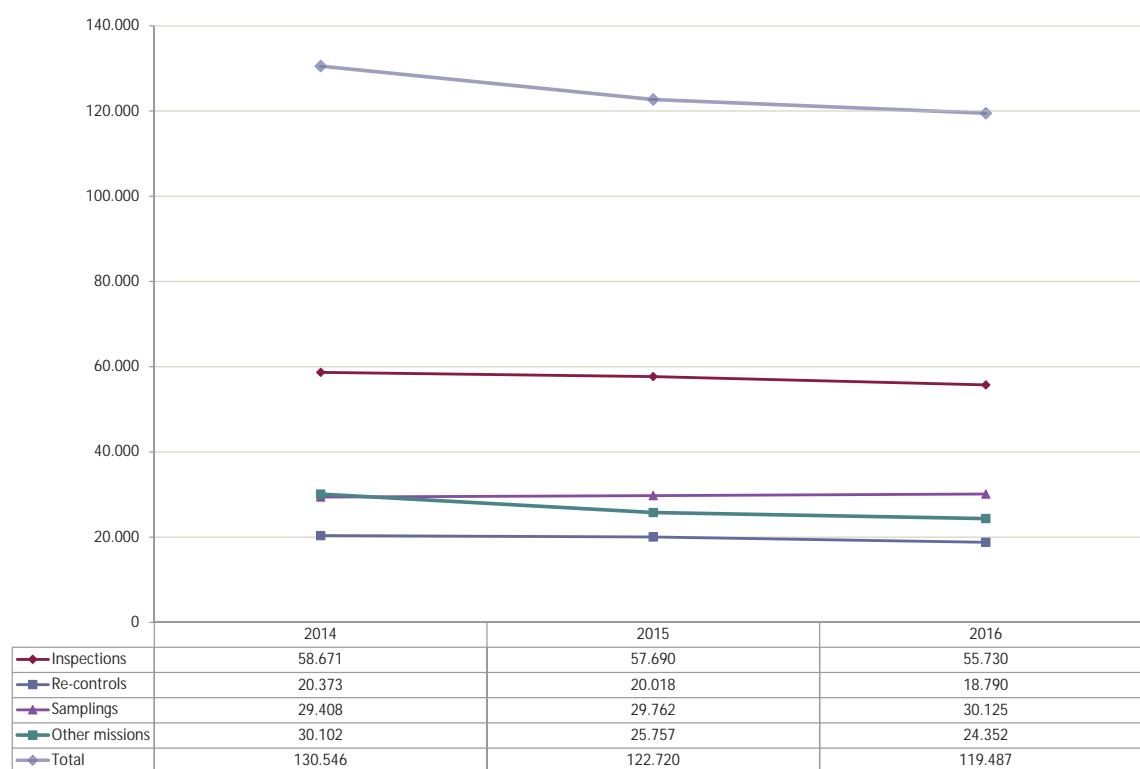
Following specific investigation assignments, measures can possibly also be taken.

At the end of each inspection, the inspector and the operator go through the list of items inspected, focussing especially on the explanation for the unfavourable results.

Each inspection requires the mutual respect of both parties, the inspector and the food business operator. The inspector who visits the business has made a commitment to act with integrity and impartiality. He or she has signed the Code of Conduct for Inspectors: <http://www.afsca.be/publicationsthematiques/Charte-controleur.asp>

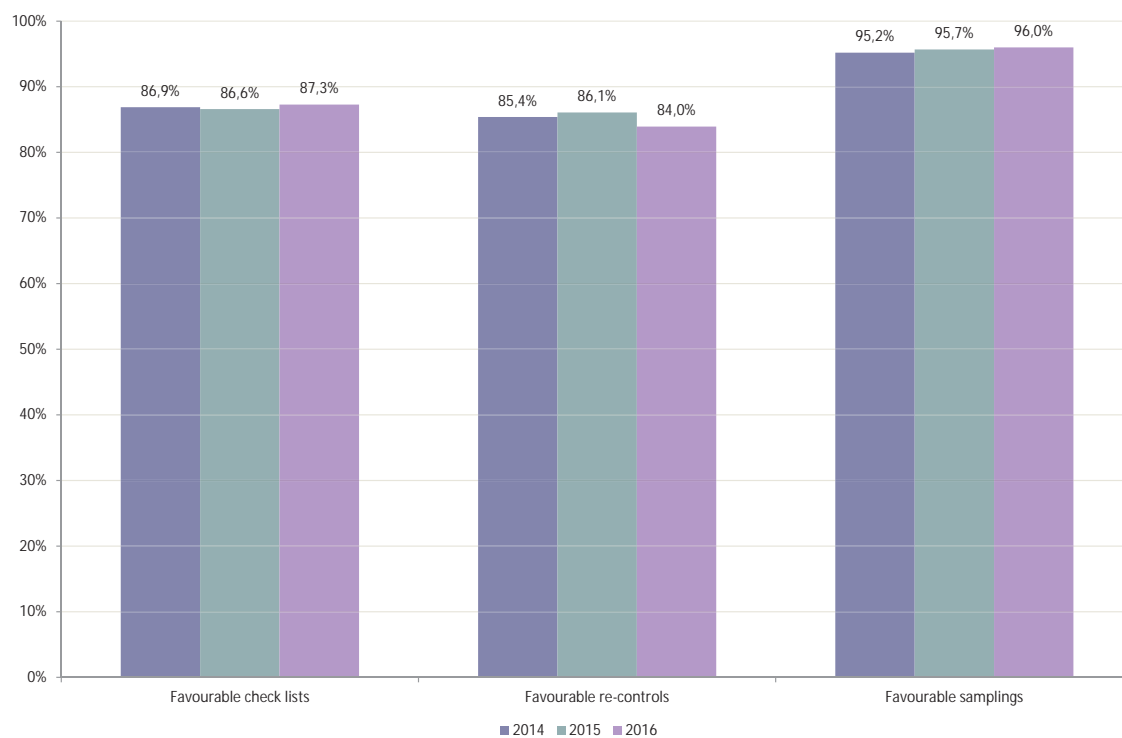
3.1. Inspection results

NUMBER OF MISSIONS	NUMBER OF OPERATORS
119.487	66.038

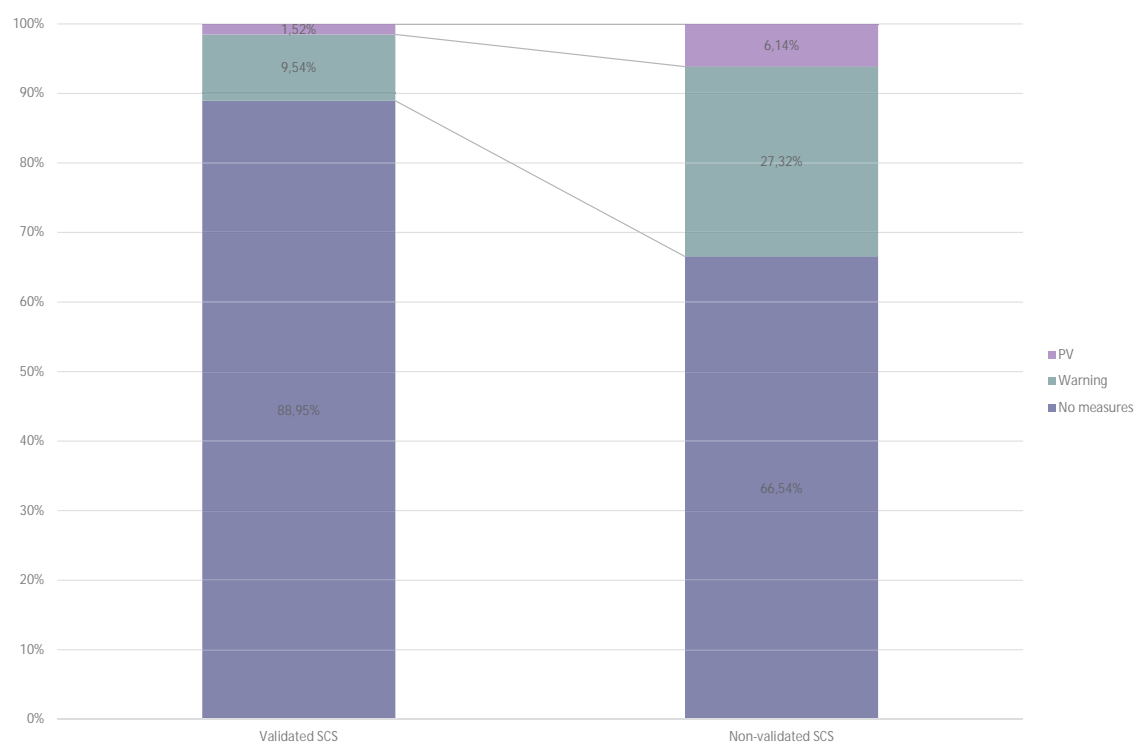


During a mission, various types of checks (inspections, samplings and other checks) can be carried out simultaneously. Consequently, the total number of missions is thus smaller than the sum of the different checks.

Results of the checks



The results of the missions are considerably better in those businesses that have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Results of the checklists of all sectors

	2015	2016	2016 VS. 2015 (%)	COMPLIANCE 2015 (%)	COMPLIANCE 2016(%)
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	53.562	53.296	-0,5%	78,0%	78,1%
Infrastructure and equipment (prior to granting the approval)	490	337	-31,2%	92,4%	91,7%
Self-checking system	25.456	25.152	-1,2%	78,0%	79,5%
Traceability	39.744	40.211	+1,2%	90,1%	89,5%
Compulsory notification	30.727	31.502	+2,5%	97,9%	98,3%
Administrative data operators	48.408	47.289	-2,3%	84,8%	87,2%
Phytosanitary checks	3.057	2.992	-2,1%	Does not apply	
Plant protection products	2.653	2.935	+10,6%	88,5%	89,9%
Animal Health	1.098	1.280	+16,6%	97,4%	95,4%
Medicines and veterinary business guidance	5.322	5.315	-0,1%	97,6%	97,0%
Epidemiological surveillance	3.391	3.332	-1,7%	94,2%	94,1%
Animal welfare	9.910	9.613	-3,0%	Does not apply	
Transport of live animals	708	894	+26,3%	99,4%	99,6%
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	4.641	4.697	+1,2%	93,8%	93,3%
Labelling	11.405	11.235	-1,5%	86,5%	87,5%
Contact materials	494	587	+18,8%	84,2%	90,5%
Foodstuff by-products	241	1.001	+315,4%	97,9%	98,9%
Smoking ban	13.436	11.603	-13,6%	95,2%	94,9%
Transport	1.830	1.853	+1,3%	98,3%	97,6%
Export approval	129	118	-8,5%	96,9%	97,5%
Autres	-	118	-	-	83,9%
Total	256.702	255.360	-0,5%	86,6%	87,3%

The calculation of the total percentage does not take into account the scopes 'animal welfare' and 'phytosanitary inspection'.



Results of the analyses

	NUMBER OF SAMPLINGS 2016	FAVOURABLE SAMPLINGS 2015	FAVOURABLE SAMPLINGS 2016	NUMBER OF MEASURES 2016
Additives and aromas	2.810	99,1%	99,3%	11
Allergens	173	99,4%	98,8%	1
Miscellaneous	11.365	97,9%	99,4%	19
Other contaminants	461	95,5%	97,0%	5
Other prohibited substances	105	69,0%	89,5%	4
Radiation	121	99,2%	100%	-
BSE	1.548	97,8%	96,6%	7
Contaminants for which no norm was established	849	100%	100%	-
Dioxins and PCBs	2.880	99,9%	99,9%	3
Medicines	17.486	99,1%	99,2%	32
GMOs	380	99,0%	98,7%	3
Indicator micro-organisms	8.865	91,3%	91,4%	146
Quality - composition	2.541	93,3%	92,8%	149
Marine biotoxins and histamine	126	100%	100%	-
Migration from contact materials	1.100	98,5%	98,5%	6
Mycotoxins	2.088	97,9%	98,9%	12
PAHCs	793	100%	99,7%	1
Pathogenic Micro-organisms	19.522	95,6%	96,0%	158
Plant health	6.038	92,5%	89,9%	123
Radioactivity	200	100%	100%	-
Residues of pesticides	4.133	97,2%	97,7%	63
Heavy metals	2.321	99,3%	99,2%	10
Total	85.905	96,5%	96,8%	753

A detailed description of all the inspections carried out by the FASFC would be beyond the scope of this report.

However, the inspection results can be consulted in the full activity report for 2016 on www.fasfc.be.

A few notable results are described in the following chapters.



3.2. Primary production

Plant production

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	3.615	97,7%
Self-checking system	6	83,3%
Traceability	3.575	97,6%
Compulsory notification	3.435	99,8%
Phytosanitary checks	2.465	Not applicable
Plant protection products	2.853	90,1%
Labelling	13	100%
Total (inspections 'phytosanitary checks' not included)	13.497	97,0%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	288
PVs (procès-verbal)	136
Seizures	232
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	14
Miscellaneous	26
Total	696

These include farms (vegetables, fruit, arable crops, seed vegetables ...), forestry companies, ornamental plants, gardeners, agricultural and horticultural workers, woodworking companies, plant gardens and

green zones, tree nurseries, as well as operators who import plant protection products for their own use.

The results are similar to those of 2015.

Animal production - keeping animals*Inspection results*

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	7.321	97,9%
Self-checking system	99	96,0%
Traceability	7.546	88,3%
Compulsory notification	3.650	99,9%
Animal Health	960	94,6%
Medicines and veterinary business guidance	5.186	97,0%
Epidemiological surveillance	3.301	94,2%
Animal welfare	5.204	Not applicable
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	3	100%
Miscellaneous	118	83,9%
Total (inspections 'animal welfare' not included)	28.184	94,8%

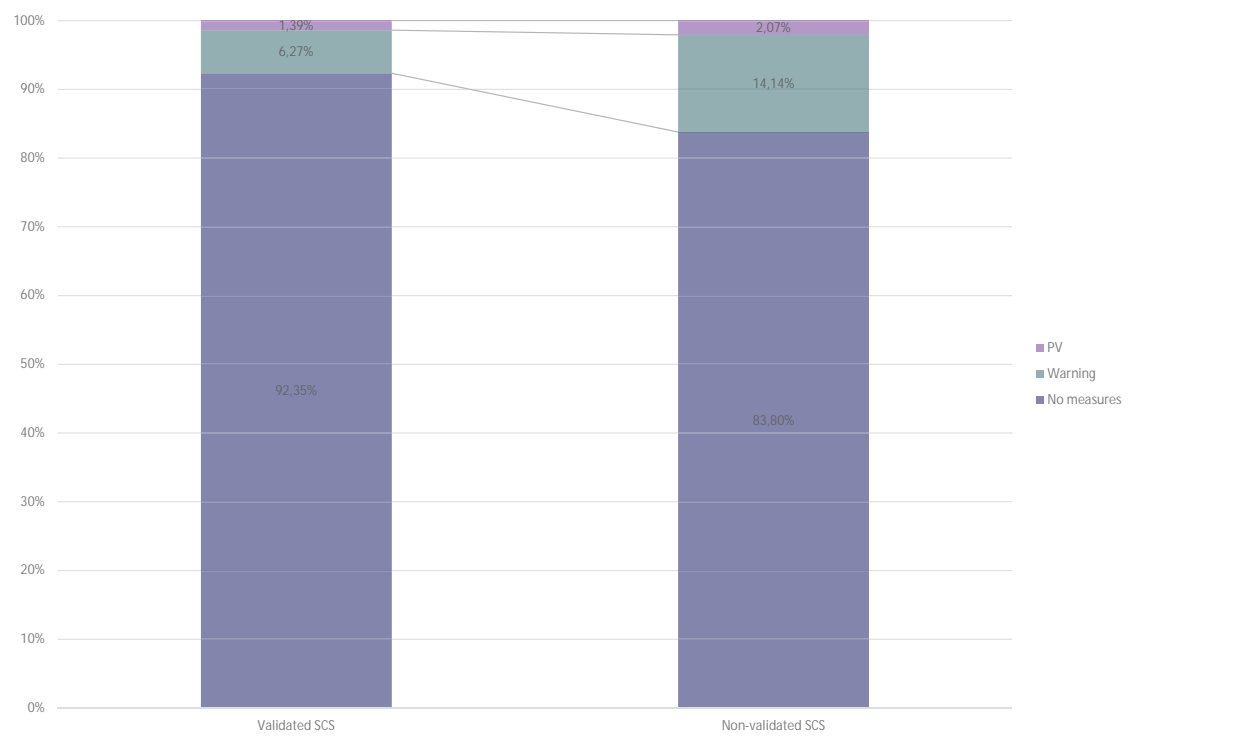
Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	1.169
PVs (procès-verbal)	107
Seizures	77
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	57
Miscellaneous	31
Total	1.441

In 2016, the 'Infrastructure' and 'Traceability' inspections in pig farms were less favourable. The most common non-conformities were the lack of a well-functioning foot bath and a sink (Infrastructure) and with regard to the relocation document, failure to comply with the category and number of pigs as registered in Sanitel and the visitors' register (Traceability).

The results of inspections with regard to 'Medicines and business guidance' in the context of 'Animal Health in Poultry' proved less favourable in 2016. The most frequently encountered non-conformities pertained to the failure to comply with business guidance requirements, in particular the signing of the medicines' register by the veterinarian and the preparation of a four-monthly evaluation report.

The results of the missions in the primary production sector are considerably better for those establishments that have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



3.2.1. Residues of pesticides

The use of pesticides in the cultivation of vegetables, fruit and arable products may result in residues thereof in food and feed. Maximum residue limits (MRL) are laid down in European legislation so that the correct use of pesticides can be checked (use of approved products in cultivation, dosage compliance and pre-harvest deadlines ...) to protect consumer health: http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/max_residue_levels/index_en.htm.

MRL are not toxicological limits. When the MRL is exceeded, this does not necessarily pose a risk to the consumer - in fact it very rarely does, but is a sign of inappropriate use of the pesticide. Food and feed in which the residues exceed the MRL may not be marketed.

The inspection programme for pesticide residues implemented by the FASFC was drawn up based on a risk assessment and pays special attention to food and feed that might exceed the MRL.

Analyses results for pesticide residues

	INSPECTION TARGET	NUMBER OF SAMPLES TAKEN	FAVOURABLE SAMPLE-TAKING*	FAVOURABLE SAMPLINGS *2015 versus 2016
Baby food	Inspection plan**	167	100%	+1,1%
	Follow-up of non-compliances***	1	100%	=
Feed	Inspection plan**	105	97,1%	-2,0%
	Follow-up of non-compliances***	3	100%	=
Vegetables, fruit, cereals and other plant products	Inspection plan**	2.129	97,8%	+0,5%
	Follow-up of non-compliances***	102	70,6%	-5,3%
	Regulation 669/2009****	255	94,5%	-0,1%
Products of animal origin	Inspection plan**	1.027	99,9%	=
	Follow-up of non-compliances***	2	100%	=
Processed products of plant origin	Inspection plan**	230	99,6%	+1,6%
Water Food and Non-Food	Inspection plan**	112	99,1%	+1,2%
Total		4.133	97,7%	+0,5%

* when the analytical uncertainty of the results are taken into account

** samples that are analysed in the framework of the inspection programme in which samples are taken at random

*** targeted samples that are analysed following non-compliances that were found in the inspection plan, complaints, ...

**** targeted samples that are analysed in the framework of the reinforced checks at import

Compliances according to the origin of the foodstuffs in the framework of the inspection plan

ORIGIN OF THE PRODUCTS	FAVOURABLE SAMPLINGS
Belgium	97,6%
EU Member States	99,7%
Third countries (non-EU countries)	95,9%

3.2.2. Phytosanitary checks

In 2016, the FASFC conducted 6.038 analyses on plants, plant products, soil and other materials that may be carriers of harmful organisms; 89,9% of the samples were compliant. The non-compliant results are mainly due to fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*) and to the large number of Thrips (small slender insects with fringed wings) which were caught during the monitoring.

These samplings were carried out at the premises of producers, in shipping centres, in public green spaces and in forests. This surveillance makes it possible to provide the international guarantees that our plants and plant products comply with the legal requirements. The FASFC delegates a considerable amount of samplings to the Regions, in particular in the seed potato cultivation sector.



Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	194	88,7%
Self-checking system	121	94,2%
Traceability	124	96,8%
Compulsory notification	163	100%
Labelling	151	92,7%
Total	753	94,2%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	30
PVs (procès-verbal)	5
Seizures	1
Miscellaneous	1
Total	37

3.2.3. Dairy farmers

This includes the dairy farmers who sell primarily to consumers directly.

Although the situation in this sector is good, a slight deterioration in inspection results is established relative to the previous year.

3.2.4. Animal Health

Belgium is officially free from various diseases in cattle and pigs: bovine leucosis (since 1 July, 1999), bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis (since 25 June, 2003), Aujeszky's disease (since 4 October, 2011). Belgium is also free from many other diseases, such as foot and mouth disease, rabies, highly pathogenic avian influenza (last case in 2003), Newcastle disease in poultry, traditional swine fever and bluetongue (since 15 February 2012).

In the context of 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 disease-free status and extend the scope. Among other things, it provides for research and systematic analyses in case of abortions in cattle and small ruminants, an adapted winter campaign, blood analyses of cattle coming from countries that are not officially free from certain diseases upon entry in Belgium, analysis and monitoring of the development of newly emerging or re-emerging diseases. The FASFC entrusts an important part of health surveillance to the Regional associations for animal health ARSIA and DGZ (monitoring and diagnosis of notifiable diseases, targeted surveillance of diseases in the framework of official surveillance and eradication programmes, support and business guidance in the framework of disease monitoring, identification and registration of animals) as well as to CODA-CERVA (the national reference laboratory for animal diseases, zoonoses, epidemiological research and risk analysis, improvement of the databases used for vaccination campaigns and animal health inspections) and allocates over €10 million per year to this health surveillance.

Bovine brucellosis

After the brucellosis incident at the end of 2010 and early 2012, with a final incident early 2013, no single bovine brucellosis incident has been detected since.

The surveillance programme provides for a compulsory inquiry in the case of abortions and investigations of certain livestock farms selected on the basis of a risk analysis:

- herds into which bovine animals were introduced that come from Member States or third countries that are not officially free of brucellosis;
- herds in which no cases of abortion were investigated (on an annual basis); and
- herds for other sanitary and epidemiological reasons.

All dairy farms were screened again twice a year by means of examination of tank milk. In 2016, all results were favourable.

Bovine tuberculosis

Belgium has been officially free of bovine tuberculosis since 25 June 2003. This means that bovine tuberculosis is still found annually in less than 0,1% of all cattle farms.

In 2016, 2 outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis were found. After detecting a first outbreak in the province of Hainaut on 30 September 2016, 48 contact farms were subjected to a follow-up treatment in the form of general herd tuberculin testing. On 12 December 2016, bovine tuberculosis was found in a contact farm of the first outbreak site. In the framework of the epidemiological investigation and the tracing of this second outbreak site, 90 additional contact farms were subjected to a follow-up treatment by means of tuberculin testing. All contact farms that had to be blocked, have in the meantime been released.

Monitoring abortions

For each notification of an abortion in cattle, sheep or goats, extensive tests are conducted in order to verify the presence of a large number of pathogenic agents. These tests are carried out 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 the placenta.

In 2016, 10.209 abortions in cattle were investigated. This means a decrease compared to 2015 (11.884)

when the start of the BVD-control programme, which requires a compulsory examination of the foetus, had caused an increase of the number of abortion investigations. The number of abortion investigations remains high owing to the financing by the FASFC of the investigations conducted in the framework of the abortion protocol and the collection of the materials to be researched. Not a single case of brucellosis was found. The pathogenic agents identified were: Neospora, Trueperella pyogenes, BVD, Listeria monocytogenes, the pathogens causing Q fever, Salmonella.



3.2.5. Antibiotics resistance

The Belgian authorities and research institutions in general and the FASFC and its scientific committee in particular, pay a great deal of attention to antimicrobial resistance. Not only is the situation being monitored (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. This is done to reduce antibiotics resistance and thereby prevent this issue from becoming a threat to public health.

Together with the different operators from the sector, the Agency makes a financial contribution and cooperates with the AMCRA (Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals). This expertise centre raises awareness among cattle farmers and veterinarians, provides a state of affairs concerning the use of antibiotics and creates guides to promote a responsible use of antibiotics. These initiatives have brought about a decline of almost 16% in the sale of antibiotics between 2011 and 2015. All parties involved are in favour of expediting the process.

2016 – Key year: from self-regulation to co-regulation

In 2016, an Agreement was signed between the Federal Government (represented by Federal Ministers of Public Health, Maggie De Block, and Agriculture, Willy Borsus, in the context of the 'One Health approach') and the relevant sectoral partners regarding the reduction of the use of antibiotics in the animal sector. The agreement formalizes the promise between the parties involved regarding reduction targets proposed by the AMCRA to monitor the use of antibiotics and to encourage the implementation of self-regulatory measures. This is a 50% reduction in the use of antibiotics in general between 2011 and 2020, a reduction of 75% in the use of critically important antibiotics between 2011 and 2020 and a 50% reduction in feeds medicated with antibiotics between 2011 and 2017. A management committee, composed of representatives of all parties involved, monitors the implementation of the measures proposed by the sectors and the government. The Royal Decree governing the use in veterinary medicine of critically important antibiotics for veterinary and public health was published in mid-2016. The mandatory central registration of the use of antimicrobial agents will begin in 2017.

Since 2011, the FASFC has been monitoring the antimicrobial resistance of pathogens and indicator germs in calves, young bovine animals, pigs and poultry. Since 2014, a monitoring harmonized on the European level has been in place, which is also carried out by Belgium. Antimicrobial resistance of, among others, *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, as well as the occurrence of ESBL-producing *E. coli*, is monitored. The European results are published annually by the EFSA.



3.2.6. Slaughter

All animals must be examined before and after slaughter. These examinations are called inspections. The primary objective of these inspections is to guarantee the protection of public health by tracing and excluding from human consumption meat that shows pathological and anatomical abnormalities,

that is contaminated by pathogenic agents, or veterinary drugs or contaminants. The inspections are carried out by an official veterinarian, usually a FASFC veterinarian on assignment.

	INSPECTED CARCASSES	SEIZED CARCASSES
Cattle	544.952	2.060 (0.4%)
Calves	368.793	246 (0.1%)
Pigs	11.212.480	31.144 (0.3%)
Horses	6.086	31 (0.5%)
Sheep	142.589	176 (0.1%)
Goats	12.860	59 (0.5%)
Poultry	310.239.266	3.583.879 (1.2%)
Rabbits	2.910,926	53,092 (1.8%)
Farmed deer	937	1 (0.01%)
Ratites	168	0 (0%)

In addition to the inspection itself, the official veterinarian also conducts checks pertaining to food chain information (FCI), animal welfare, specified risk materials (measures taken with regard to BSE or mad cow disease) and other by-products,

the lab tests, hygiene, the infrastructure and self-checking. If an animal welfare violation is detected, the regions will be notified.

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	630	85,7%
Self-checking system	311	89,1%
Traceability	314	97,5%
Compulsory notification	303	100%
Animal welfare	1.952	Not applicable
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	299	94,3%
Labelling	299	99,3%
Transport	271	97,8%
Total (inspections 'animal welfare' not included)	2.427	93,5%



Measures

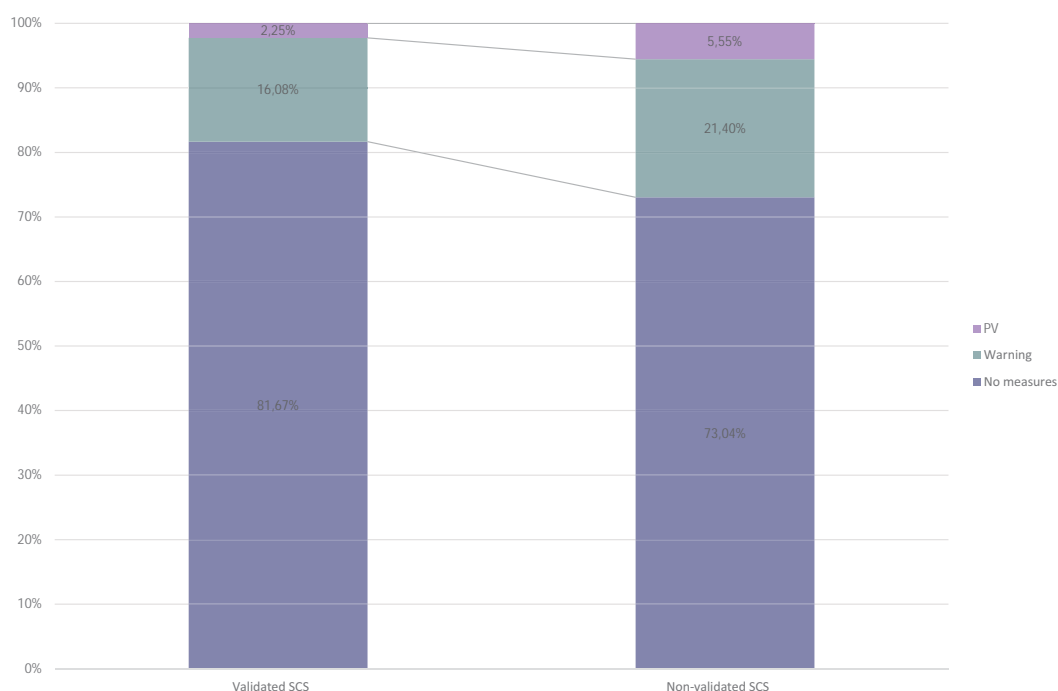
	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	103
PVs (procès-verbal)	16
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	2
Miscellaneous	4
Total	125

3.3. Processing of products

Results of the 4,982 missions carried out in 4,368 food processing establishments

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	8.592	89,6%
Infrastructure and equipment (prior to granting the approval)	308	93,5%
Self-checking system	3.889	88,6%
Traceability	4.234	93,6%
Compulsory notification	3.595	98,6%
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	1.894	97,6%
Labelling	5.703	92,5%
Foodstuff by-products	1.001	98,9%
Transport	1.576	97,7%
Total	30.792	92,9%

The results of the inspections in processing establishments are considerably better for those establishments that have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warning	1.021
Pro Justitia report - infringement	247
Final seizure	167
Temporary closure	1
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	8
Measure other operator	18
Miscellaneous	61
Total	1.523

The results are generally satisfying and comparable to those of 2015.



Cutting plants

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	1.249	87,3%
Infrastructure and equipment (prior to granting the approval)	33	100%
Self-checking system	497	90,1%
Traceability	543	93,7%
Compulsory notification	502	98,4%
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	502	97,4%
Labelling	813	96,2%
Transport	249	96,4%
Total	4.388	93,1%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	113
PVs (procès-verbal)	38
Seizures	15
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	2
Miscellaneous	3
Total	171

These results are comparable to those of 2015

Meat products*Inspection results*

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	2.212	91,6%
Infrastructure and equipment (prior to granting the approval)	156	92,9%
Self-checking system	963	91,3%
Traceability	825	94,5%
Compulsory notification	886	99,0%
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	884	98,3%
Labelling	1.439	96,4%
Transport	791	98,5%
Total	8.156	94,9%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	175
PVs (procès-verbal)	48
Seizures	20
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	3
Miscellaneous	8
Total	254

These inspection results are comparable to those of 2015.

3.4. Distribution of foodstuffs

Wholesale businesses

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	2.077	89,9%
Self-checking system	1.475	91,4%
Traceability	1.385	92,4%
Compulsory notification	1.926	98,6%
Phytosanitary checks	122	Not applicable
Labelling	2.257	91,9%
Foodstuff by-products	254	99,6%
Total (inspections 'phytosanitary checks' not included)	9.374	93,0%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	393
PVs (procès-verbal)	98
Seizures	44
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	4
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	12
Miscellaneous	20
Total	571

These results are comparable to those of 2015.

Butcher shops*Inspection results*

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	2.466	65,2%
Self-checking system	2.175	89,4%
Traceability	2.225	88,0%
Compulsory notification	2.003	99,2%
Animal by-products not intended for human consumption	2.170	91,3%
Labelling	943	84,0%
Total	11.982	85,7%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	861
PVs (procès-verbal)	210
Seizures	44
Temporary closures	7
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	1
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	8
Miscellaneous	36
Total	1.167

The results are comparable to those of 2015, except for the inspections concerning traceability requirements, which were less favourable. As regards the compulsory notification, an improvement could be noted.

Bakeries

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	1.355	58,9%
Self-checking system	1.040	80,9%
Traceability	1.070	86,1%
Compulsory notification	1.000	97,4%
Labelling	276	80,4%
Total	4.741	79,2%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	497
PVs (procès-verbal)	157
Seizures	14
Temporary closures	10
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	4
Miscellaneous	30
Total	712

These results are comparable to those of 2015.

Other retailers (except for fishmongers and transport)*Inspection results*

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	7.276	75,4%
Self-checking system	3.240	83,0%
Traceability	4.127	89,0%
Compulsory notification	4.063	97,5%
Labelling	3.110	78,4%
Total	21.816	83,6%

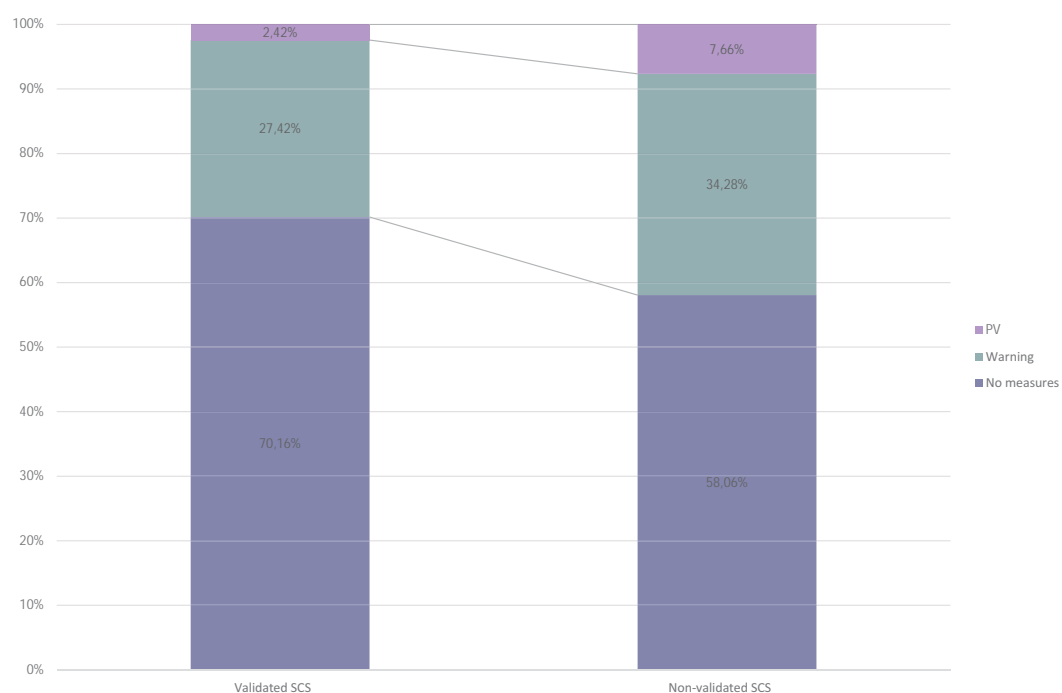
Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	2.311
PVs (procès-verbal)	521
Seizures	141
Temporary closures	14
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	1
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	62
Miscellaneous	92
Total	3.142

As for the inspection results of the implementation of the self-checking system and compulsory notification, an improvement could be noted compared to 2015.

3.5. Hotel and catering industry and institutional kitchens

The inspection results in hotel and catering businesses and institutional kitchens are remarkably better in businesses which have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Hotel and catering industry

The overall inspection results are similar to those for 2015, with the exception of those of traceability, which are less favourable.

Just like 2015, the most severe non-conformities in terms of hygiene related to:

- non-compliance of the cold chain and the temperatures of refrigerated foods (9,7%);
- inadequate cleanliness of surfaces that come into contact with food (9,5%);
- the presence of spoiled foods or foodstuffs whose consumption date has been exceeded or which are unsuitable for human consumption (7,5%);
- lack of personal hygiene and/or wearing unsuitable or dirty clothing (7,0%); and
- defrosting foods under unsuitable conditions (5,9%).

The main non-conformity for itinerant businesses is the lack of facilities for washing hands with running water, liquid soap and a hygienic hand-drying system (19,5%).

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	13.801	61,8%
Self-checking system	9.224	68,1%
Traceability	9.114	85,2%
Compulsory notification	8.637	97,4%
Smoking ban	11.263	95,0%
Total	52.039	80,1%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	5.190
PVs (procès-verbal)	1.294
Seizures	112
Temporary closures	23
Procedures for suspension or withdrawal of an approval	2
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	27
Miscellaneous	207
Total	6.855

Institutional kitchens

Inspection results

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	5.556	79,9%
Self-checking system	3.875	87,8%
Traceability	4.100	92,9%
Compulsory notification	3.918	99,0%
Total	17.449	89,0%

The overall inspection results are similar to those of 2015. There is an improvement in the Inspection results regarding the self-checking system. Also the results for infrastructure, equipment and hygiene in

a number of institutional kitchens, and particularly in schools, have improved, while those in hospitals and prisons are less favourable.

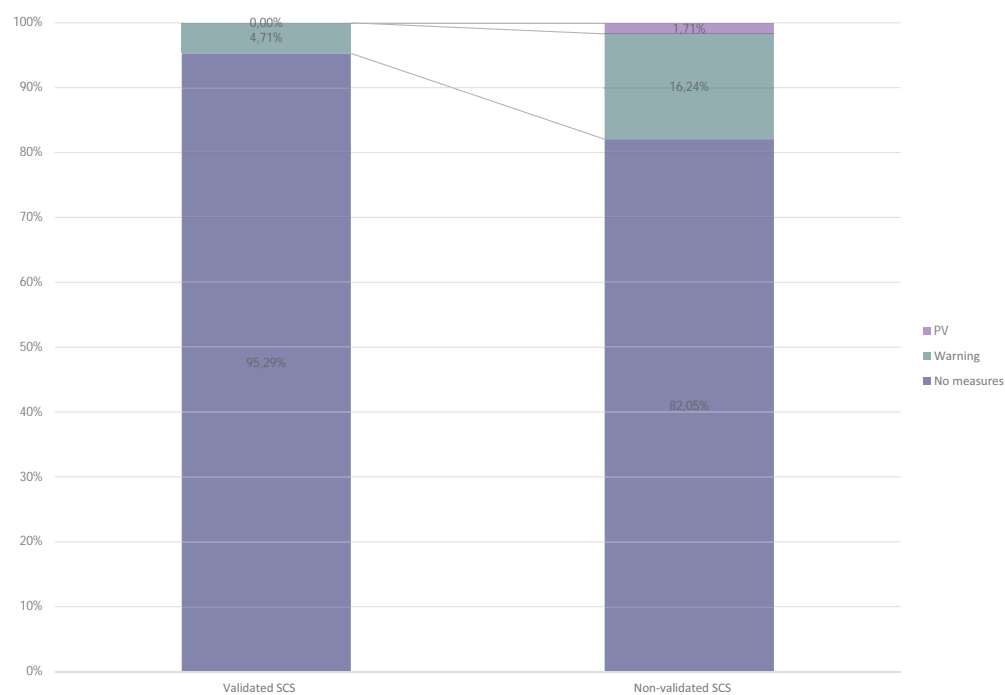
Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	1.450
PVs (procès-verbal)	90
Seizures	5
Temporary closures	1
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	20
Miscellaneous	37
Total	1.603



3.6. Contact materials

The results of the inspections in this sector are considerably better for those establishments that have a validated self-checking system (SCS).



Results of the 670 missions at 667 manufacturers and wholesalers of materials intended to come into contact with foodstuffs

	NUMBER OF CHECKLISTS	FAVOURABLE CHECKLISTS
Infrastructure, equipment and hygiene	248	87,9%
Self-checking system	247	89,5%
Traceability	250	96,4%
Compulsory notification	246	95,9%
Labelling	102	89,2%
Contact material	587	90,5%
Total	1.680	91,5%

Measures

	NUMBER OF MEASURES
Warnings	99
PVs (procès-verbal)	10
Measures following non-compliances at another operator's premises	2
Total	111

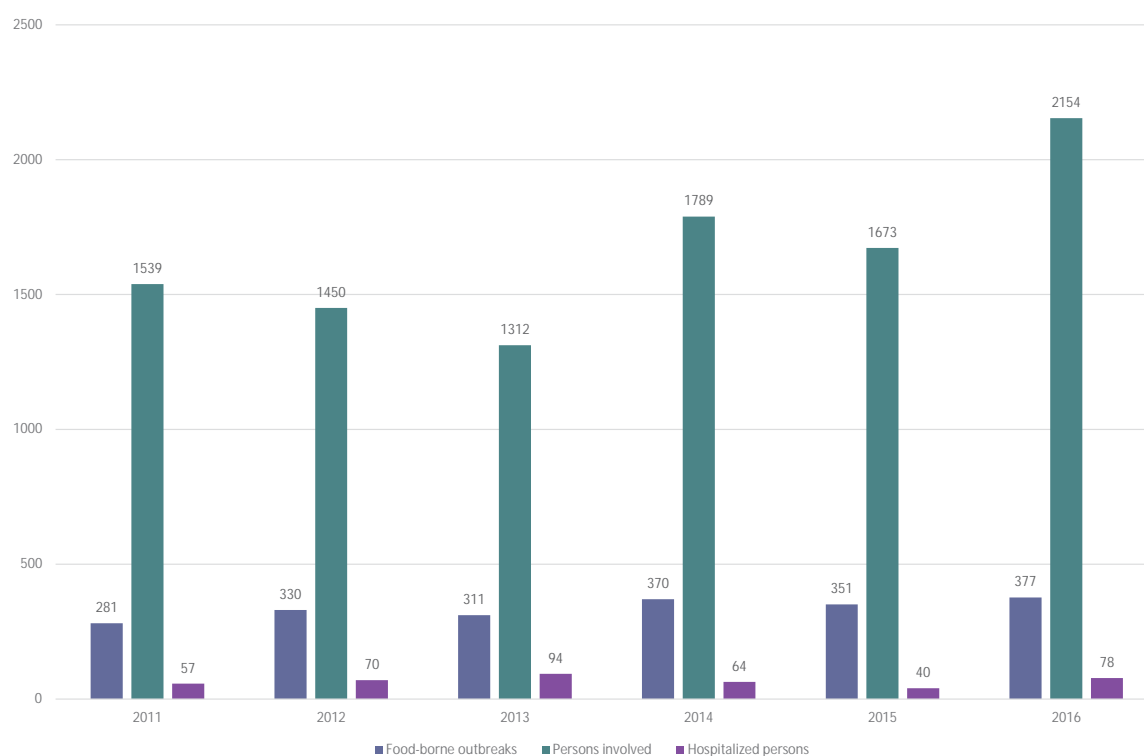
On the whole, the results for 2016 are similar to those of 2015. As for the compulsory notification and the specific requirements regarding contact materials, an improvement was noted.

3.7. Food-borne outbreaks

'Food-borne outbreaks' is an umbrella term for infections or intoxications caused by the consumption of microbiologically contaminated food or water. We speak of food-borne outbreaks when, under the same circumstances, 2 or more people display similar symptoms and when there is a (probable) causal relationship with the same food source.

In 2016, 377 food-borne outbreaks were reported: 2,154 people were involved, 78 of whom were hospitalized. In 2016, there were no deaths resulting from reported food-borne outbreaks. The increase in the number of people involved compared to previous years is due to some outbreaks involving a relatively large number of people.

Number of notified food-borne outbreaks



The cause of the food-borne outbreaks was identified in only 3,4% of the cases by analysis of food remnants or by examination of the sick

	NUMBER OF FOOD-BORNE OUTBREAKS	NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED	NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOSPITALIZED	NUMBER OF DEATHS	% OF PEOPLE INVOLVED	SUSPECTED ORIGIN
Campylobacter	3	6	4	0	0,45	Unknown
Clostridium perfringens	4	302	0	0	13,53	Beef stew, vol-au-vent, Mixed food
Coagulase positive staphylococcus	2	25	2	0	1,21	Cheese, pork and derived products
E. coli O157:H7/VTEC	2	14	2	0	0,72	Cheese
Norovirus	7	205	6	0	9,45	Beef and derived products, crustaceans, tap water
Salmonella	2	139	41	0	8,06	Eggs and egg products
Unknown	357	1.463	23	0	66,58	Unknown
Total	377	2.154	78	0	-	-

However, the suspicion that the number of food-borne outbreaks is underestimated continues to exist. This has to do, among other things, with issues of diagnosis and more precisely the difficulty in establishing a link between a food-borne outbreak and food. In addition, the ineffective and often late notification of food-borne outbreaks also plays a crucial role in this respect. Certainly in case only mild symptoms appear, food-borne outbreaks are usually not reported.



3.8. Checks at import

Import checks: number of consignments (with % of refused)

	2014	2015	2016
Live animals	3.147 (0,8%)	13.361 (0,2%)	13.353* (0,2%)
Foodstuffs	25.045 (0,5%)	24.681 (0,4%)	22.737 (0,6%)
Plants and plant products	17.744 (0,5%)	19.832 (1,0%)	15.764 (0,9%)
Products not intended for human consumption	2.174 (0,8%)	2.353 (0,6%)	2.425 (0,9%)
Total	48.110 (0,5%)	60.227 (0,6%)	54.279 (0,6%)

* 10,028 of which were consignments containing fish and aquaculture animals

Extended official import checks

In the EU, there is a harmonized approach of the checks on food and feed imported from third countries. Based on known risks or new risks, European legislation provides for more extensive checks of feed and food of non-animal origin, including analyses, at the points of entry into the EU (airports, seaports,...). The purpose is to more effectively control new or known risks and collect analysis results.

In 2016, 483 analyses were carried out on more than 3.299 consignments of imported vegetables, fruit (including garden herbs), spices, nuts, etc.; 18 consignments were refused due to non-compliant results: the presence of residues of pesticides (14), mycotoxins (3) and micro-organisms (1).

Import checks in the framework of protective measures

When it appears that certain foodstuffs and feed imported from certain third countries possibly pose a serious risk to the health of humans, animals or the environment and that it is impossible to sufficiently manage the risk, the European Commission may determine special conditions by way of protective measures. The products concerned are reported to the FASFC for inspection, after which they are always subjected to a document check (certificate, analysis report ...) and possible sampling for further analysis.

In 2016, 1.299 consignments have been imported into Belgium, 177 of which underwent sampling : 33 consignments were rejected, of which 24 due to non-compliant documents.

These protective measures are aimed at conducting checks on: aflatoxins on nuts (groundnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts), dried figs and pastes of these products, nutmeg and watermelon seeds from certain third countries (Ghana, India, Iran, China, Egypt, Nigeria, Turkey, Indonesia, Brazil):

- 141 of the 892 shipments to be notified were sampled, 32 were refused (23 of which were due to non-compliant documents);
- pentachlorophenol (PCP) in guar gum and derived products from India: 11 of the 211 shipments were sampled and found to be compliant;
- GMOs in rice and rice products from China: 11 of the 12 shipments were sampled and found to be compliant, 1 shipment was refused due to non-compliant documents;
- radioactivity of foodstuffs from Japan due to the nuclear incident in Fukushima: 11 of the 173 shipments were sampled and found to be compliant;
- pesticide residues on okra from India.: 3 of the 11 shipments were sampled and found to be compliant;



3.9. Fraud control

In the context of fraud control 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, veterinary medicines, internet sales of food supplements,...).

This Unit actively cooperates with various Belgian authorities and international bodies and participates in the working groups of:

- the Multidisciplinary Hormone Unit (MHC-CMH),
- 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 Food Fraud Working Group organized by DG Sanco of the European Commission,
- the working Group of Enforcement Officers (WGEO).

Fraud control

	2014	2015	2016
Fraud Investigations	404	522	562
Participation in roadside checks	47	18	59
Samplings in farms	66	58	98
Samplings in slaughter houses	452	452	51
Specific actions	34	23	21
The transfer of information to other services	76	113	85
Infringements	225	168	209

Checks of passengers' luggage at customs

In cooperation with customs, the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP) and the FPS Public Health and the FASFC conducted checks on passengers' luggage at Brussels National Airport (Zaventem), and the airports of Brussels South (Gosselies), Bierset and Ostend. The observance of the rules concerning the import of meat, plants, animal products and plant products, animals - protected species

included- was checked during these controls, since compliance with these rules is of utmost importance to public health and the protection of endangered species (CITES). Checks also targeted the illegal import of cosmetics and medicines. This action is referred to as the «BACON» action (BAGgage CONTROLS).

In the 38 inspections carried out in 2016 (24 in 2013, 28 in 2014 and 38 in 2015), the FASFC, FAMHP and FPS Public Health seized products from 663 travellers (291 in 2014 and 468 in 2015).

	2014	2015	2016
Foodstuffs (meat, fish, dairy products, fruit,...)	724 kg	1.915 kg	2.156 kg
Cosmetic products	1.241	1.670	972
Boxes of medicines	1.322	1.211	2.060

In the framework of the awareness creation campaign aimed at the prevention of rabies, checks on pets were carried out: 331 dogs and cats were checked in 2016, compared to 67 in 2015; 9 animals were placed in quarantine due to the non-observance of the waiting time after vaccination.

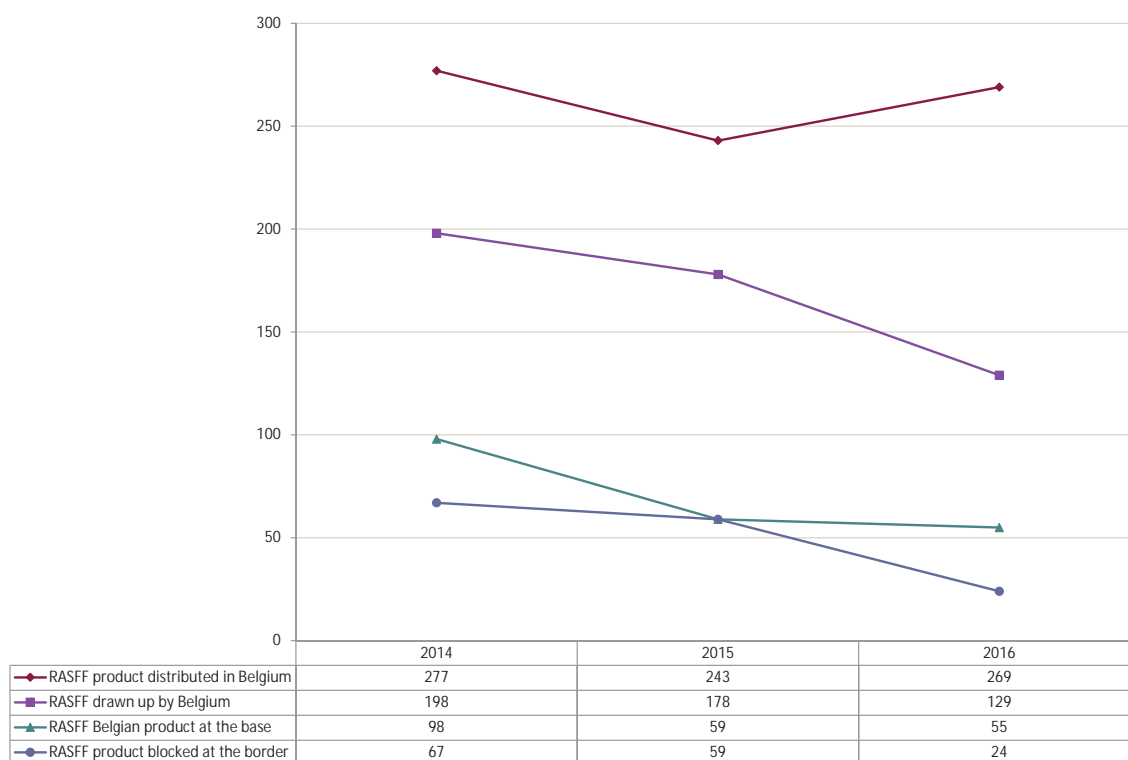
A special campaign was launched at the Dog Show in Brussels. For three days, 277 dogs and cats were examined, mainly from third countries.

3.10. Notifications and consequences of checks

3.10.1. RASFF

In 2016, all EU member states combined made 2.993 notifications via the Rapid Alert System for Food & Feed (RASFF) (3.133 in 2013, 3.090 in 2014,

2.961 in 2015) concerning products that might pose a threat to the health of humans or animals.



The top 5 of Belgian RASFF-notifications in 2016 based on the hazard

	RASFF
Mycotoxins	25,6%
Pathogenic micro-organisms	20,2%
Pesticide residues	11,6%
Residues of veterinary medicines	7,8%
Heavy metals	7,0%

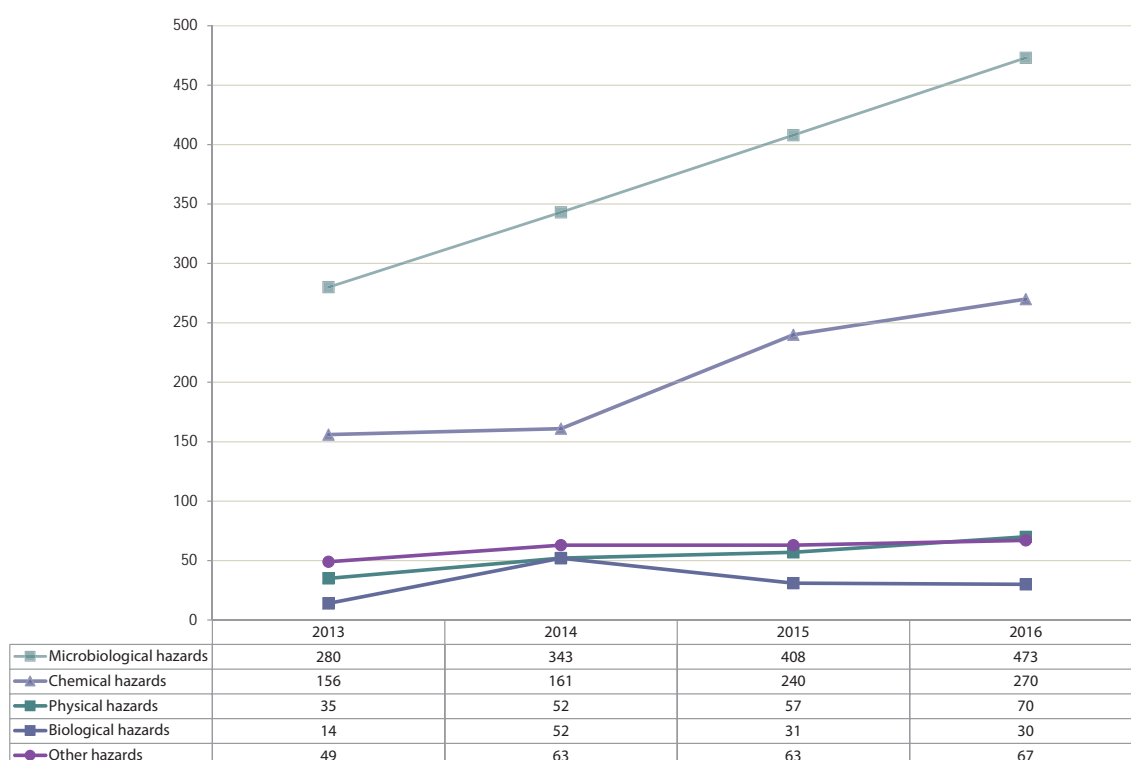
Top 5 of Belgian RASFF notifications in 2016 per product category

	RASFF
Feed	17,7%
Nuts and derived products	16,9%
Fruit and vegetables	12,3%
Poultry meat (products)	7,7%
Fish and fishery products	6,2%

3.10.2. Compulsory notification

Each operator carrying out activities that fall under the FASFC's responsibilities is required to inform the Agency whenever he/she suspects that a product imported, produced, raised, grown, processed,

manufactured or distributed may be detrimental to the health of humans, animals or plants.



The number of notifications increased by 14% compared to 2015.

3.10.3. Follow-up of non-compliances

Measures following non-compliances

	2014	2015	2016
Warnings	15.557	16.129	15.862
PVs (procès-verbal)	6.092	6.391	6.974
Seizures	1.761	1.521	1.555
Temporary closures	79	106	127
Amount of administrative fines	2.915.695,00€	3.010.935,00 €	3.802.300,00 €

Seizures

PRODUCTS	QUANTITIES 2014	QUANTITIES 2015	QUANTITIES 2016
Cereals and bakery products	289 tons	12.489 tons	2.066 tons
Feed	520 tons	28 tons	379 tons
Fruit and vegetables	560 tons	18 tons	145 tons
Fishery products	12 tons	16 tons	144 tons
Plants and propagating material	15 tons	30 tons	122 tons
Meat and meat products	116 tons	60 tons	103 tons
Processed animal products	2 tons	19 tons	26 tons
Pesticides	4,6 tons	12 tons	3,5 tons
Various foodstuffs	1.522 tons	1.356 tons	151 tons





Food safety barometers

4

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

The barometers always make a comparison with the previous year and rely on indicators that are calculated based on carefully chosen measurable parameters. Most of these indicators are based on the results of the FASFC control programme.

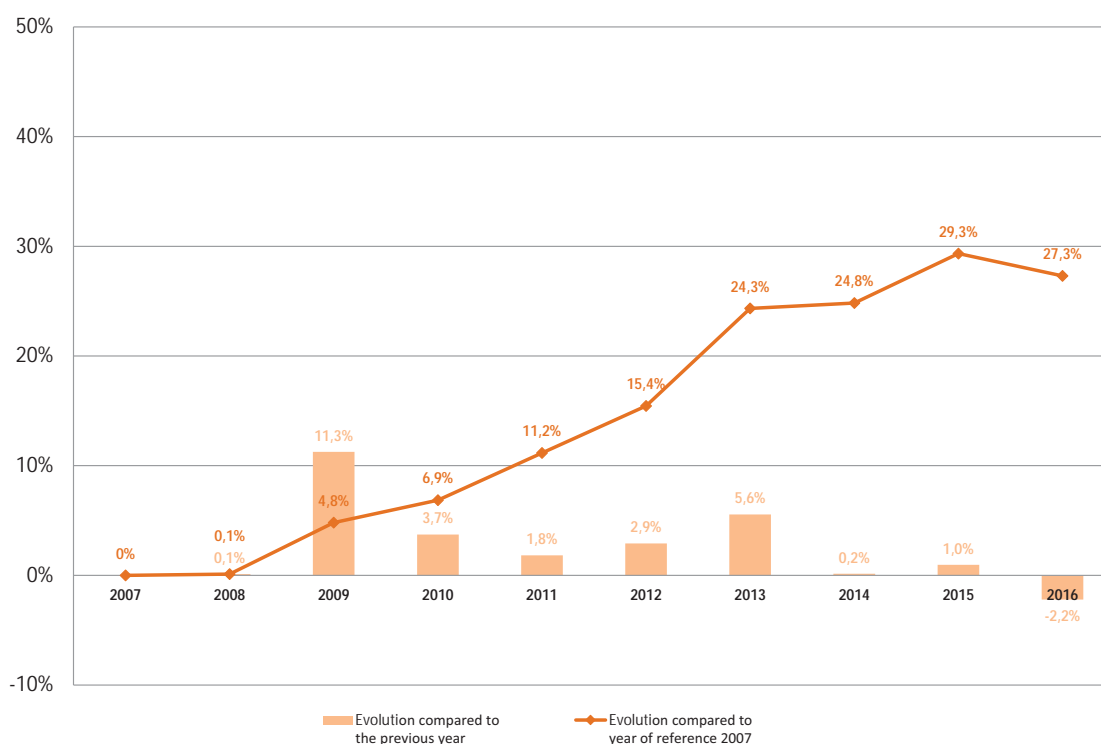
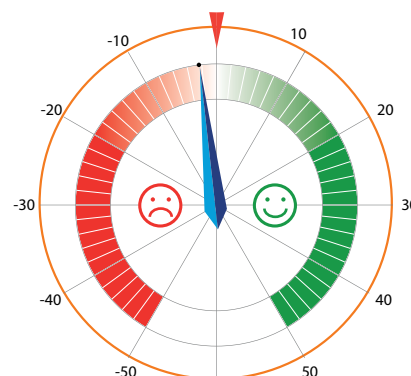
Since these indicators have different effects on the safety of the food chain, their relative importance has been weighted. They must be interpreted with the necessary caution, since annual fluctuations can have several causes. The food chain safety barometer is particularly suited for detecting general trends in food chain safety. Generally, the underlying results show that food safety in our country is at a high level.

4.1. Food safety barometer

For the first time since the barometers are calculated, the food safety barometer shows a slight deterioration of food safety in 2016. This negative evolution (-2,2 % compared to 2015) can be attributed mainly to an increase of the number of people affected by collective foodborne outbreaks and to the increase of the number of reported cases of listeriosis in humans.

2015 | 2016

- 2,2%

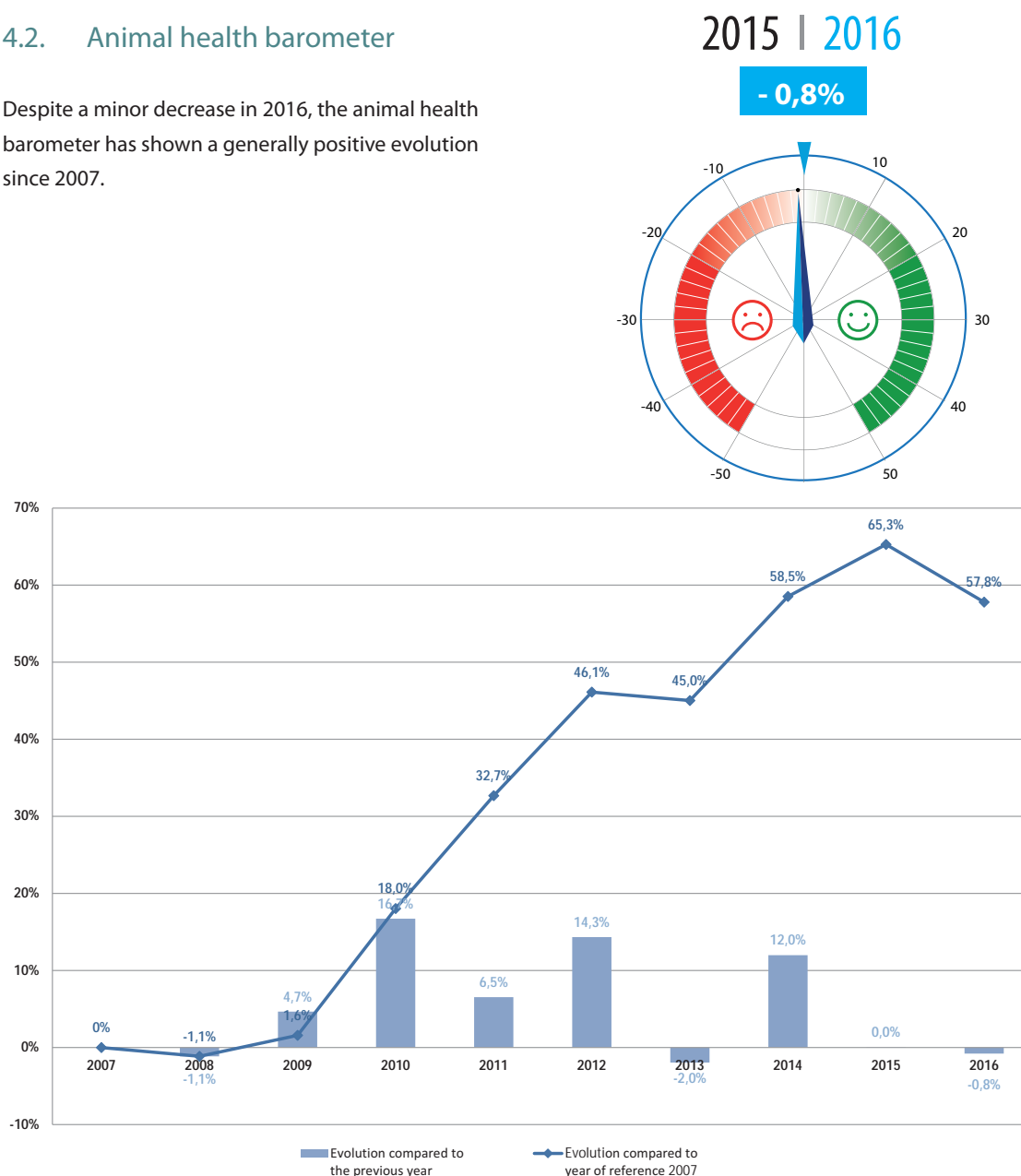


Both indicators have a relatively major impact on the final barometer result. In addition, the number of favourable traceability inspections has also slightly decreased and the situation regarding the presence of pesticide residues in Belgian products has become slightly less favourable. Notwithstanding, Belgian products are still compliant in more than 95% of the cases.

Furthermore, a positive evolution can be discerned in the number of notifications regarding food safety and in the number of food business operators with a validated self-checking system in the processing sector and in the institutional kitchen sector. These results indicate an increased proactive approach to food safety. In the 'business-to-consumer' segment, an additional increase of the total number of favourable inspections of infrastructure, equipment and hygiene can be observed.

4.2. Animal health barometer

Despite a minor decrease in 2016, the animal health barometer has shown a generally positive evolution since 2007.



Compared to 2015, a slight decrease (-0,8%) can be observed in the animal health barometer in 2016. This decrease is mainly due to an unfavourable evolution of the indicator on the antibiotics sensitivity of *E. coli* bacteria in poultry, pigs, young bovine animals and meat calves, the mortality rate of small ruminants and the notification of bovine abortions. In addition, it should also be noted that the indicator on the number of primary animal production businesses with a validated self-checking system has fallen back slightly for the second consecutive year.

There has also been a slight decrease in the indicator on traceability inspections for the fifth consecutive year.

The number of notifications of notifiable animal diseases, on the other hand, shows a positive evolution, which points to an improved surveillance of notifiable animal diseases.

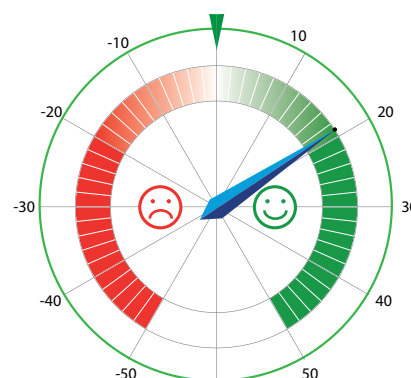
Finally, it should be noted that the indicator on the inspections of animal welfare could no longer be calculated, since the monitoring of animal welfare has recently become a regional responsibility (this was already the case in 2015). The FASFC's scoring system thus no longer applies.

4.3. Plant health barometer

Compared to 2007, the plant health barometer shows a clearly positive trend. This trend can be explained primarily by the favourable evolution of the indicators pertaining to self-checking in the plant production sector and notifications of plant diseases and harmful organisms.

2015 | 2016

+ 18,9%



Between 2015 and 2016 the plant health barometer increased by +18,9 %. The primary cause of this increase is the very favourable evolution of the indicator regarding the notification of plant diseases and harmful organisms (which can be interpreted as the result of heightened vigilance). It has to be noted that the majority of the notifications we received pertained to scientific research findings. Simultaneously, an unfavourable evolution can be observed in the indicator related to phytosanitary checks at import and the indicator related to *Phytophthora ramorum* (sudden oak death).

It also has to be noted that the indicator regarding phytosanitary inspections (physical checks) is no longer taken into consideration in calculating the barometer. This decision was made following the modification of the evaluation system for the checklists used for these inspections. As a reminder, the indicator related to checks on the corn rootworm (*Diabrotica virgifera* Le Conte) is also no longer taken into consideration since 2015.

Facts and figures

Safe food day after day: our job!

2016

Federal Agency
for the Safety
of the Food Chain

