

# The EU Community Reference Laboratories: role and perspectives



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# From farm to fork

- New legislation covering the whole food chain
  - Directive 2003/99/EC
  - Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003
  - Regulation (EC) 852/2004
  - Regulation (EC) 853/2004
  - Regulation (EC) 854/2004
  - Regulation (EC) 2073/2005
  - Regulation (EC) 882/2004
  
- To ensure that all food – whether produced in Europe or imported – meets the same high safety standards

# Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls

- Community Reference Laboratories for feed and food (CRL)
- National Reference Laboratories (NRL)

# CRL functions and duties

- Analytical methods, including reference methods
- Comparative testing
- Training courses (NRLs, developing countries)
- Scientific and technical assistance to the Commission
- Collaboration with laboratories in third countries

# Member States

- Shall designate one or more NRLs for each CRL
  - If more than one → NRLs must work closely together
- NRL may be situated in another MS or EFTA country
- A single NRL may be NRL for more than one MS

# NRLs functions and duties

- Collaborating with the CRL
- Coordinating the activities of official laboratories
- Organising comparative tests (where appropriate)
- Disseminating information from the CRL to competent authorities and official laboratories
- Providing scientific and technical assistance to the competent authority

# Regulation (EC) No 776/2006

## CRLs for food and feed (27)

### ■ CRLs in the microbiological field

- Salmonella: RIVM, NL
- Viral and bacteriological contamination of bivalve molluscs: CEFAS, UK
- *Campylobacter*: SVA, SE
- *E. coli*, including VTEC: ISS, IT
- *Listeria monocytogenes*: AFSSA, FR
- Coagulase positive *Staphylococci*: AFSSA, FR
- Antimicrobial resistance: DFVF, DK
- Parasites (in particular *Trichinella*, *Echinococcus* and *Anisakis*): ISS, IT

# Directive 2003/99/EC on monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents - 1

- Art 4.1: MS shall collect relevant and comparable data in order to identify and characterise hazards...
- Art 4.2: Monitoring shall take place at the stage or stages of the food chain most appropriate to the zoonosis and zoonotic agent concerned



# Directive 2003/99/EC on monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents -2

- Art 4.3: Monitoring shall cover zoonoses and zoonotic agents listed in Annex I, Part A:
  - Brucellosis, campylobacter, echinococcus, listeriosis, salmonellosis, trichinellosis and agents of these zoonoses, tuberculosis due to *M. bovis* and **verotoxigenic *E. coli***

# Opinion of the SCVMPH on Verotoxigenic *E. coli* (VTEC) in foodstuffs in 2003 (1)

- The terminology used to describe human pathogenic VTEC is confusing and creates difficulties in the interpretation of reports
- Only a small fraction of all VTEC-types isolated from animals, food or the environment are associated with human illness
- There is currently insufficient information to identify the burden and main sources of non-O157 VTEC infections in humans

## Opinion of the SCVMPH (2)

- Categories of foodstuffs where VTEC represents a hazard to public health
  - Raw or undercooked beef and possibly meat from other ruminants
  - Minced and/or fermented beef and products thereof
  - Raw milk and raw milk products
  - Fresh produce, sprouted seeds
  - Unpasteurised fruit and vegetable juices

# Opinion of the SCVMPH (3)

- No microbiological standards for VTEC in general and for VTEC O157 in particular when low prevalence in food
- Microbiological guidelines e.g. for *Enterobacteriaceae*
- Methods to detect non-O157 VTEC should be developed

# Zoonoses report 2004, EFSA

- Variation in sampling and testing procedures between MSs (animals, food)
- Information on pathogenicity factors of the isolated VTEC strains not provided

➤ Not comparable data in EU

# Expectations

- High quality and uniformity of analytical results
  - Validated analytical methods
  - Comparative testing
  - Training of NRLs
  - Scientific and technical assistance to the Commission
    - The expertise of the CRL when developing monitoring activities

Thank you for your attention

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