



Lab news

Preparation of a European body of legislation on official controls: “Healthier animals and plants and a safer agri-food chain”

Françoise Kremer (francoise.kremer@agriculture.gouv.fr)

Department for laboratories and coordination of official control

French Directorate General for Food, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Paris, France

On 6 May 2013, the Commission adopted a set of four proposed regulations that seek to modernise, simplify and strengthen the regulatory framework relating to official controls covering not only the food chain, but also animal health, and the health of plants and plant reproductive material (seeds and plants). These four regulations will replace around 70 pieces of legislation.

The rules on organisation and quality of controls in the current Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, known as “Official Controls”, will be adapted to these three sectors that were not previously covered by the current regulations, and will undergo improvements. Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 had been adopted in the narrower framework of Regulation (EC) 178/2004 (the “Food Law”) and of the “Hygiene Package”.

The legislative work of the European Parliament and the Council begins at the end of May but, according to the Commission, the new provisions are unlikely to come into effect before 2016. The provisions on the analytical methods and official laboratories appear in Chapter IV, Articles 33 to 41. The conditions for designation as an official laboratory still involve accreditation, but include exceptions and the possibility of temporary designation when there has been a change in methods or in a crisis situation.

The articles on reference laboratories and centres are grouped under Title III, in Articles 91 to 99 of the “Official Controls” proposal. The principle of creating a reference network including both the European Union reference laboratories and the national reference laboratories is maintained, and has been extended to plant health.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-400_en.htm
or

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/animal-plant-health-package