



Veterinarians care about your food

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In the EU serious efforts are made to assure the safety and quality of the food. The EU food chain is subject to a comprehensive set of rules that protect the health of consumers, the health and welfare of animals and the environment. This EU legislation includes specific controls to assure that rules are respected. Such controls (the so-called official controls) are carried out by the national authorities.

Veterinarians with their recognised and extensive knowledge and expertise in the fields of animal health/welfare and public health play a crucial role in controlling and defending the safety and quality of food. Veterinarians performing official controls for the national authorities are official veterinarians. Official veterinarians bring an added value to the society. They represent a public good particularly on farm and in the slaughterhouse environment.

Currently, the way official controls shall be carried out is under revision¹. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is concerned that this revision of the legislation might be misused as an opportunity to save money rather than to strengthen the quality of the food chain. Such approach creates unnecessary risks for food safety, public health, animal health and welfare and the environment.

In light of the several animal disease outbreaks in Europe (e.g. African swine fever), food frauds (e.g. illegally treated animals) and the frequent occurrence of food or feed risks, FVE calls upon the EU Institutions to strengthen the consumer protection and the position of the veterinarian in the official controls. FVE wants to highlight the following:

1. **National governments shall put in place all necessary resources to allow Competent Authorities and official veterinarians to fulfil their responsibilities (audit, inspection, enforcement);**
2. **Official controls shall be done by adequate numbers of properly qualified and authorised official veterinarians;**
3. **Since the inspection of live animals before slaughter is crucial for the detection and the prevention of spreading of contagious diseases these inspections shall always be carried out by qualified official veterinarians;**
4. **Inspections carried out after the animal is slaughtered shall only be delegated to assisting staff when they are sufficiently trained and under the supervision of the official veterinarian.**

President

Rafael Laguens

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Andrew Robinson
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¹ [Food safety - rules for checks on meat & shellfish](#)
[Food safety - practical arrangements for checks on animal products](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 44 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries, representing a total of around 240 000 veterinarians. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) strives to promote animal health, animal welfare and public health across Europe.

*For further information, consult the FVE website www.fve.org
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