

Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH)

Given the urgency of the situation, the meeting of the Working Party of the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO), held on 10 December 2008, has been transformed into a Standing Committee to discuss and agree on these guidelines.

Guidelines as regards measures to be taken following the dioxin incident in Ireland

The SCoFCAH had an exchange of views on the alert notification launched by the Irish authorities on 6 December as regards dioxins in pig meat from Ireland (RASFF 2008.1584).

Based on the statement from EFSA¹ and the information provided by the delegation of Ireland and affected Member States, the SCoFCAH has considered the following risk management measures, ensuring a high level of consumer protection in the European Union and third countries:

- 1) pig meat from Ireland, produced from 1 September 2008 until 6 December 2008 should be withdrawn from the market and safely disposed of.
- 2) both composite food products², such as pizza, sandwich, meat sauces, etc ..., and meat products containing Irish pig meat and fat with a total percentage up to 20 %³ should be excluded from the withdrawal.
- 3) both composite products and meat products containing Irish pig meat and fat with a total percentage above 20 % should be withdrawn from the market and detained. A representative sample should be taken and only if an analytical test⁴ shows compliance with the EU dioxin legislation⁵, these products can be put on the market again. In case of non-testing or non-compliant result, the products should be safely disposed of.

As regards cattle products, the Irish and UK (for Northern Ireland) authorities shall provide further information to the RASFF on the possible contamination. Member States should take action based on the information distributed through RASFF.

¹ Statement of EFSA on the risks for public health due to the presence of dioxins in pork from Ireland, issued on 10 December 2008

Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/cs/BlobServer/Statement/contam_ej_911_dioxins.pdf?ssbinary=true

² composite product: a foodstuff intended for human consumption that contains both processed products of animal origin and products of plant origin (Commission Decision 2007/275/EC)

³ EFSA concluded "*In a more likely scenario with a daily consumption of 10% contaminated Irish pork for a mean consumer of pork fat for the respective period of the incidence (90 days), at the highest recorded concentration of dioxins (200 pg WHO-TEQ/g fat), the body burden would increase by approximately 10% EFSA considers this increase in body burden of no concern for this single event.*" Given that the 200 pg is the highest recorded concentration and that the average of the contaminated meat is more likely around 100 pg, the threshold of 20 % can be considered to be in line with this conclusion.

⁴ sampling and analysis have to be performed in accordance with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EC) 1883/2006 of 19 December 2006 laying down methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of levels of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in certain foodstuffs (OJ L 364, 20.12.2006, p. 32)

⁵ Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of 19 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs. (OJ L 364, 20.12.2006, p.5)