



Developments in the legislation on food hygiene related with VTEC

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Lessons learned: Risk management: prevention in food of non-animal origin

- Enforcement of existing hygiene rules
- Inspection of the enforcement by FVO
- Encouragement of guides for good hygiene practice
- Dedicated Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) sessions on hygiene at primary production for major trade partners
- Better preparedness: *S. Stanley?*
- Specific rules for sprouts (traceability, microbiological criteria, hygiene requirements, ...)

Specific new rules on sprouts

- Traceability of sprouts and seeds intended for sprouting
 - **Step before and step after**
 - **Flexibility on way**
 - **Reconds to be kept**
- Import certification
- Approval of sprouts establishments
- Specific guidance on hygiene requirements
- VTEC food safety criterion

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: overview

Sprouts	<i>STEC (6 serotypes)</i>	n = 5, c = 0	Absence in 25 g	EN/ISO 13136	Products placed on the market during their shelf life
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- All new batches of seeds, 0.5% by weight
- Min 48 h incubation
- On sprouts or irrigation water
- At least once a month

Date of application: 1 March 2013

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: a long way

- October 2011: EFSA opinion
- November 2011-January 2012: internal reflections
- February-June 2012: Consultations/discussions/ WG meetings with MS and private sector.
- July 2012: Technical agreement at Standing Committee
- August-September 2012: WTO consultation
- 15 October 2012: final opinion at standing committee
- By end of November 2012: translations
- Until end of January 2013: right of scrutiny of Council and European Parliament
- Beginning of February 2013: publication in Official Journal
- Applicable from 1 March 2013.

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion

- The VTEC food safety criterion for 6 serotypes (O157, O26, O103, O111, O145, O104:H4) in Regulation (EC) 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria in foodstuffs;
- Addressed to food business operators (FBO). It applies to sprouts placed on the market but to ensure compliance of sprouts on the market, FBO must also monitor in the sprout establishments;
- Competent authorities should verify compliance including sampling at the establishments and sprouts on the market;
- First VTEC microbiological criterion in EU legislation. ⁶

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: FBO obligations

- Preliminary sprouting of a representative sample of all batches of seeds:
 - ***at least 0.5% of the weight of the batch of seeds in sub samples of 50g or***
 - ***based on a structured statistically equivalent sampling strategy verified by the competent authority.***
- under the same conditions as the rest of the batch of seeds to be sprouted;
- In practice: obligation to sample and test the first time he sprouts a new batch of seeds.

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: Batch

- 'batch' means a quantity of sprouts or seeds intended for the production of sprouts, with the same taxonomic name, which is dispatched from the same establishment to the same destination on the same day. One or more batches can make up a consignment. However, seeds with a different taxonomic name, which are mixed in the same packaging and intended to be germinated together and sprouts thereof are also considered as one batch.

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: Sampling and analysis

- After at least 48 hours of sprouting;
- 5x 25 grams of sprouts or 5x 200 ml of irrigation water;
- No pooling unless equivalence has been demonstrated;
- No placing on the market until result is known (and negative for the 6 serotypes);
- Analyses may stop after exclusion of VTEC or when FBO decides to no longer use a batch of seeds for sprouting after detection of VTEC.

Specific new rules on sprouts: VTEC food safety criterion: sampling frequency

- In principle each (new) batch of seeds
- Reduced frequency is possible:
 - (a) *the competent authority is satisfied that the FBO implements a food safety management system in that establishment, which may include steps in the production process, which reduces the microbiological risk; **and,***
 - (b) *historical data confirms that during at least 6 consecutive months, all batches of the different types of sprouts produced in the establishment comply with the VTEC and Salmonella food safety criteria*
- Absolute minimum: once per month

Microbiological criteria in EU legislation: Regulation (EC) 2073/2005

- *Food safety criteria and process hygiene criteria*
- *Addressed to food business operators*
- *Official controls: guidance document with request to be consistent with food safety criteria*
- *Purpose: **harmonised** standards of food safety: same standards in all MS, same acceptance of risks in all Member States => avoid discussions at intra-EU trade and import.*

Why are certain pathogens not in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005?

- *If high prevalence in certain food: clearly a risk management decision not to include (too high economic impact, no cost efficient control options available, other priorities, ...): e.g. Campylobacter in poultry meat.*
- *If low prevalence (high sampling costs to detect): other approaches considered more appropriate e.g. (certain) VTEC in beef: Process hygiene criterion for Enterobacteriaceae to control faecal contamination.*

Are Member States allowed to withdraw food from the market if there is no food safety criterion in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005?

- *YES if in line with Art. 14 of R 178/2002 (food considered as unsafe):*
 - **Taking into account further processing and labelling**
 - **Based on a case by case risk assessment by MS**
- *YES if national food safety criterion*
 - **Notification and acceptance by other MS and EC mandatory + not applicable to trade from other MS and TC**
- *YES in case of special guarantees*

Will we have a food safety criterion for certain pathogenic VTEC in beef?

- *First step: EFSA opinion. Pathogenic VTEC clearly defined?*
- *Second step: demonstration if such criteria would result in a cost efficient further reduction of human infections?*
- *Third step: support of MS by qualified majority needed.*

Application of Art 14 by MS. Examples of position taken by the EC

Not accepted unless clear case by case demonstration of additional elements increasing the risk:

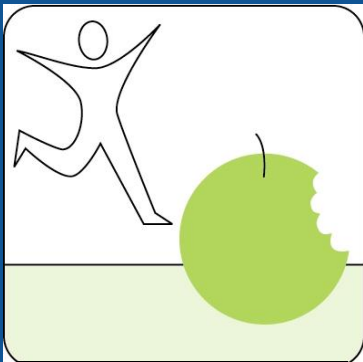
- *Campylobacter (even if quantitative criterion) in poultry meat*
- *Listeria/Salmonella in fresh fish*

Acceptable:

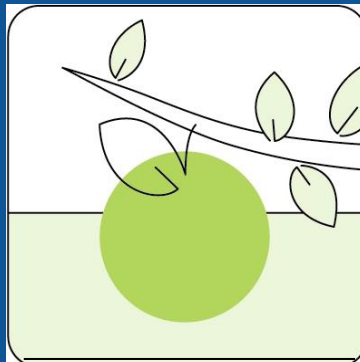
- *Listeria in sushi*
- *Pathogenic VTEC in minced beef*

Visit our webpage:

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Public Health



Food safety

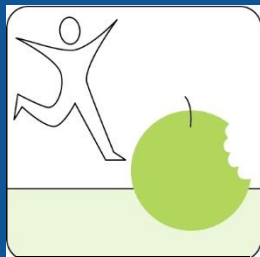


Consumer Affairs

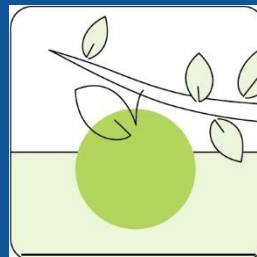
Thank you very much for your attention!

DG Health & Consumers

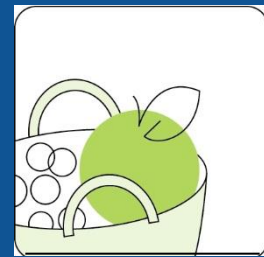
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Public Health



Food safety



Consumer Affairs