



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,
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Opinion

Title

SANCO - Impact assessment accompanying a proposal for the Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules on a salmonella food safety criterion in fresh meat of fowl of Gallus Gallus and turkeys

(draft version of 20 December 2010)

(A) Context

In 2003, Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 was adopted on the control of salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents in food. The legislation sets targets for reduction of salmonella prevalence in animal populations at risk. In addition, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market and to reduce salmonella prevalence and public health risk, the legislation governs sampling regimes and sets trade restrictions for animals and food contaminated with certain strains of salmonella bacteria. This impact assessment focuses on establishing a harmonised sampling regime for the application of the salmonella food safety criterion in fresh poultry meat (i.e. chicken and turkey) which directly affects withdrawals from the market and also affects incentives.

(B) Overall assessment

The report provides sufficient evidence to justify policy action. It should nevertheless be improved in certain respects in order to make the reasoning more transparent. The report should better explain the wider legal and policy context, adding a brief explanation of the overall EU strategy on salmonella. The report should indicate the rationale for selecting the less accurate option 4 for in-depth assessment and should clarify what risk-based adjustments are allowed under option 3. The report should also present a clearer assessment of the level of public health impact of each option that is backed by evidence or logical reasoning and that takes into account the differences in direct and indirect impacts. Fuller explanation is needed about how the final ranking of options was decided.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

(1) Better explain the wider legal and policy context. The report should explain the EU strategy for reducing levels of serious human disease and fatalities arising from salmonella contamination by giving brief details of what is being done to ensure the

safety of products other than poultry meat. The report should also explain why it is important to regulate the final suppliers of poultry meat in addition to downstream actors such as farmers and slaughterhouses, with reference to the evidence on imports provided in an annex. The main report text should highlight the limited scope for directly reducing the risk of human disease via the withdrawal of meat from the market due to its short "use-by" dates. The report should outline the benefits of ensuring consistency between Regulation (EC) No 2106/2003 which this initiative proposes to amend and Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 and should indicate the sampling approach required by the latter. Finally, some text should be added to explain the disparities in contamination rates across Member States (Table 1, section 2).

(2) Indicate the rationale behind the options examined. The report should indicate that option 4 was selected for in-depth assessment due to stakeholder support, as given its less accurate testing it is analytically hard to justify. It should also indicate why legally binding options are considered more suitable than non-legislative options, such as the use of industry standards. The report should better explain the content of option 3, which emerges as the preferred option, to provide more information on the two targeted serotypes and to make clear which of its sampling requirements could be adjusted on the basis of risk and what degree of discretion is available to Member States.

(3) Present an assessment of health impacts, with text to justify scores. Additional text is needed to substantiate the claim that options 1-5 have relatively similar health impacts and to explain the scores currently provided in the comparison table that ranks the options. The report should provide an assessment of the level of public health impact of each option that is backed by evidence or logical reasoning and that takes into account the differences in direct impact (via withdrawal of contaminated meat) and indirect impact (via accurate identification of contaminated meat, so sanctions and controls can be applied at source). The text and table explaining the impact should be consistent. The distribution of impacts across Member States and over time should be briefly discussed.

(4) Justify the ranking of options. The report should explain how the final ranking of options was decided on. Brief text explaining the basis for the scoring on 'legal' and 'analytical' aspects should be added. If any option has been advised against on legal grounds, then it should be ruled out in the impact assessment section and should be excluded from the final comparison table to avoid confusion.

(D) Procedure and presentation

Option 2 should be clearly identified as the common basis against which other options are compared in the text and tables. It should be highlighted that it is the 'planned EU approach' rather than the normal baseline of 'no additional EU action'.

(E) IAB scrutiny process

Reference number	2010/SANCO/019 (catalogue - comitology)
External expertise used	No
Date of IAB meeting	26 January 2011