

## **ECA Briefing note**

### **Commission Implementing Regulation on temporary measures to facilitate official controls on food and feed law in view of COVID-19**

**March 2020**

In the view of the ongoing situation linked to the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the European Commission has published today an [Implementing Regulation](#) on temporary measures to contain risks to human, animal and plant health and animal welfare during certain serious disruptions of Member States' control systems.

The Regulation enters into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and will be **applicable until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020**.

#### **MAIN DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WHEN PERFORMING OFFICIAL CONTROL**

The European Commission, alerted by the Member States, identified following issues combined with performing official controls to ensure the application of food and feed law, plant health and plant protection products:

- **Lower capacity to deploy suitable staff for official controls**, as a consequence of imposed movement restrictions in the Member States
  - Difficulties connected to performing clinical examinations and other **physical checks**
  - Issues regarding the testing of samples in official laboratories
- Problems linked to **issuance and signature of official certificates**, mandatory for movement of consignments between the Member States or entering the EU

#### **TEMPORARY MEASURES INTRODUCED TO REMEDY THE SITUATION**

The EU Regulation lays down following temporary measures, which aim to improve planning and the performance of official controls and other official activities during the crisis linked to COVID-19.

Member States wishing to apply the temporary measures laid down in this Regulation shall inform the Commission and the other Member States.

- **Official controls may be exceptionally performed by one or more persons, specifically authorized by the competent authority**, based on their qualifications, available by any means of communications. Such persons, however, must act impartially, without any conflict of interest
- Any activity linked to official controls may be performed by way of an **official control performed on an electronic copy of the original of certificates** or attestations as well as on an electronic format of the certificate produced in the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). However, the original of the official certificate must be submitted as soon as technically feasible
- **Analyses**, testing or diagnoses **may be exceptionally performed by any laboratory designated by the competent authority** on a temporary basis
- **Physical meetings** with operators and their staff, combined with official controls and techniques, **may be carried out via any available means of remote communication**

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