



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Required Report - Public distribution

Date: 12/12/2008

GAIN Report Number: BU8017

Bulgaria

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Recall of contaminated dioxin Irish pork

2008

Approved by:

Hoa Huynh
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Mila Boshnakova

Report Highlights:

Bulgarian Veterinary Office reaction to the contaminated with dioxin Irish pork was timely and well balanced. The authorities were able to recall 76 MT out of total 100 MT imported to the country after September 1 via inspections of 112 freezers/refrigerated warehouses and 437 meat processing plants. The remaining 24 MT were processed prior to the notification on December 6; about 10 MT of this quantity was most likely sold to consumers.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
Sofia [BU1]
[BU]

Bulgarian government reaction 3
Recall 3
Media reaction 3

Bulgarian government reaction

On December 8, the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and the National Veterinary Office officially announced the news about the dioxin contaminated Irish pork. The EU notifications via RASFF (rapid alert system) were received on Dec 6, 7 and 8.

The reaction of the local authorities was timely and well balanced. Immediate actions were taken to prevent possible transshipments from third countries since Bulgaria was not listed as an importing country of Irish meat.

The National Veterinary Office established an emergency group to deal with the recall case and coordinate work with other government agencies and the European Commission. The Veterinary Office also involved the local meat industry through the National Association of Meat Processors and enjoyed its full support. Samples from contained meat were sent to the EU reference labs in Holland and Belgium for express testing despite the availability of a local lab, to avoid possible misinterpretations by public/media. Recently appointed Chief Veterinary Officer, although young and not experienced with such recall cases, acted timely and professionally, in close coordination with the EU authorities.

Bulgaria voted positively for the EC decision to dispose all pork produced in Ireland after September 1, 2008 without having to test the products, and to recall only products containing more than 20% of Irish pork.

Recall

Bulgarian imports of Irish pork produced after Sep 1, 2008 were 100, 592.36 kilos which entered the country on October 15 and were offloaded in refrigerated warehouses in Sofia, Plovdiv and Chaskovo. Out of total, 24, 197.46 kilograms were used in processing prior to the notification time. Out of those 24 MT, about 10 MT are most likely already sold to consumers.

The remaining 76, 394.9 kilograms were all recalled from the market – it included 14 MT of meat processed into 78,600 cans and 15,263 kilograms of sausages – these products are contained currently under the control of veterinary authorities; the rest recall quantities were 61,465 kilos of raw Irish pork which is subject to disposal based on recent Brussels' decision. The above mentioned processed products are subject of laboratory testing and after the results are produced, a decision will be taken about their eventual disposal. Next week (December 15), the CVO Office has to take a joint decision with the Ministry of Environment about the location/facilities for the meat disposal.

A few containers containing Irish pork which were reported to be on their way to Bulgaria around the time of notification were returned to origin on a request of the Bulgarian Vet Office.

Based on the existing traceability system, the CVO Office was able to identify 4 major meat processors which processed Irish pork into ready-to-eat products. The veterinarian doctors were able to locate even small lots of one box of 25 kilos and its buyer. Total 112 freezers/refrigerated warehouses and 437 meat processing plants were inspected to execute the recall.

Media reaction

The Veterinary Office outreach to public was based on scientific evidences and on facts. Media coverage was reasonable despite some newspapers' attempts to describe the case as

just another crisis and to try to blame the CVO Office's inability to cope with such situations. TV and other electronic media were showing interviews with researchers, medical doctors and industry players along with official information. As a result, unlike in other similar cases in the past, there was no panic on the market and the industry not only did not criticize the authorities but for the first time over the last 5-6 years expressed its satisfaction with the veterinarian actions.