

Food Surveillance

Published: 26.04.2021.

Food circulation is one of the most strictly regulated sectors of the economy and those businesses involved in any phase of food circulation must be ready to comply with the requirements of a range of regulatory enactments. They include regulations and decisions of the European Union, laws of the Republic of Latvia and regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

In accordance with the legislation, the manufacturer of food is liable for the harmless and quality of food. In order to guarantee safe and harmless food to consumers, food companies introduce a self-control system that enables them to control risks, which could arise in food circulation.

State surveillance of food circulation is one of the main functions of the FVS, therefore, while implementing the principle control "from field to table", the inspectors of the FVS ensure regular monitoring of compliance with regulatory enactments at all phases of food circulation – acquisition of the product, production, sales and catering.

In order to plan and organise the monitoring of food circulation companies, the FVS has gathered information on all companies involved in food circulation and registered them by allocating a registration number to each of the companies. The registered companies are summarised in the register of companies subject to the surveillance of the FVS and the lists of these companies are available to any interested person on the website of the FVS. Companies that intend to be involved in an activity, which is related to the processing, reprocessing, production, cooling, storing and packaging of food of animal origin and the acquisition of meat, must be subject to the recognition procedure. The recognition procedure is the evaluation of the activities of the company and the capacity of the company to constantly maintain the conformity of its operations and products to the provisions of the law and the requirements declared by the company itself, which is confirmed by the recognition number granted by the FVS. The recognised companies are entitled to distribute their products in the market of the European Union without limitations and to export them to third countries, if the requirements in effect in third countries have additionally been complied with.

Companies that are not registered with the FVS are considered to be companies that are involved in illegal business activity.

In order to ensure that the food is harmless and qualitative, appropriate equipment and packaging must be used in the production process thereof. The food inspectors perform the surveillance and control of the materials and products that are intended for contact with food. Inspections are performed at those companies that produce and sell not only food packaging, but also kitchenware, tableware and food production equipment.

Food inspectors also perform the surveillance and control of biological agriculture companies and products manufactured by these companies.

The consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables assumes an ever larger place in daily life. Food inspectors take care to ensure that these products not only have a good external appearance when they reach customers, but that they also possess the appropriate taste properties and comply with the particular quality standards.

Food quality schemes is a specific area of food surveillance that refer to the products of various countries, including domestic products, that have been manufactured in accordance with traditional production methods or considering the specific nature of local production in particular areas.

Based on the inspection plan, the inspectors of the FVS perform the inspections of food companies every day. Extraordinary inspections are performed upon the receipt of consumer complaints, information from other institutions or in cases of potential risk.

In order to receive objective information on the harmless and quality of food and compliance with hygiene requirements, the inspectors regularly collect product samples and send them for laboratory testing. If the companies fail to comply with the requirements of regulatory enactments, FVS inspectors are entitled to suspend the distribution of a product or to remove the inappropriate

products from circulation, as well as apply administrative sanctions – warning, fine and other sanctions up to the suspension of company operations.

The surveillance and control of food circulation is organised and coordinated by the Food Surveillance Department.

<https://www.pvd.gov.lv/en/food-surveillance>