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Food safety: Shortcomings found in local food hygiene controls in Iceland

Control and enforcement of food hygiene by the local Icelandic authorities was found inadequate in several instances. This is part of the overall conclusion of a report published by the EFTA Surveillance Authority today.

The report describes the outcome of a planned mission carried out by the Authority in Iceland from 28 February to 4 March 2011.

The objective of the mission was to verify that official controls related to food hygiene and import of food of non-animal origin were carried out in compliance with the European Economic Area legislation.

Although coordination and cooperation between the central competent authority (MAST) and the local municipal competent authorities were in general confirmed as effective, several shortcomings of the controls were detected at local level:

- Official food controls at establishment level were not always carried out with documented procedures and reports were not always written.
- In case of non-compliance, enforcement was sometimes absent or not documented e.g. regarding own control systems and general hygiene requirements.
- Procedures at local level for non-compliant lots were in some cases without proper follow up.

New legislation regarding import controls of food of non-animal origin was in the stage of implementation.

The report includes a number of recommendations addressed to the Icelandic competent authority aimed at rectifying the identified shortcomings and enhancing the control system in place.

The Icelandic competent authorities have taken note of the shortcomings identified, and have addressed some of them in a reply to a draft version of the report. The reply is annexed to the final report.

Read the final report here.

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