



FOOD SAFETY FROM THE FARM TO THE FORK

This issue looks at some figures for controls on the food that arrives at our tables. "Food Safety - From the Farm to the Fork" is the global intervention strategy adopted by the European Union (EU) to ensure healthy, safe food throughout the production supply-chain. The legislation is laid down in EC Regulations no. 852, 853, 854 and 882/2004 and subsequent amendments, which are the foundations of the Hygiene Package, a set of principles including integrated controls throughout the food chain; measures based on risk analysis; placement of primary responsibility with food business operators for each product they make, process, import, sell, or administer; product traceability throughout the supply chain; and consumer involvement as an active part of food

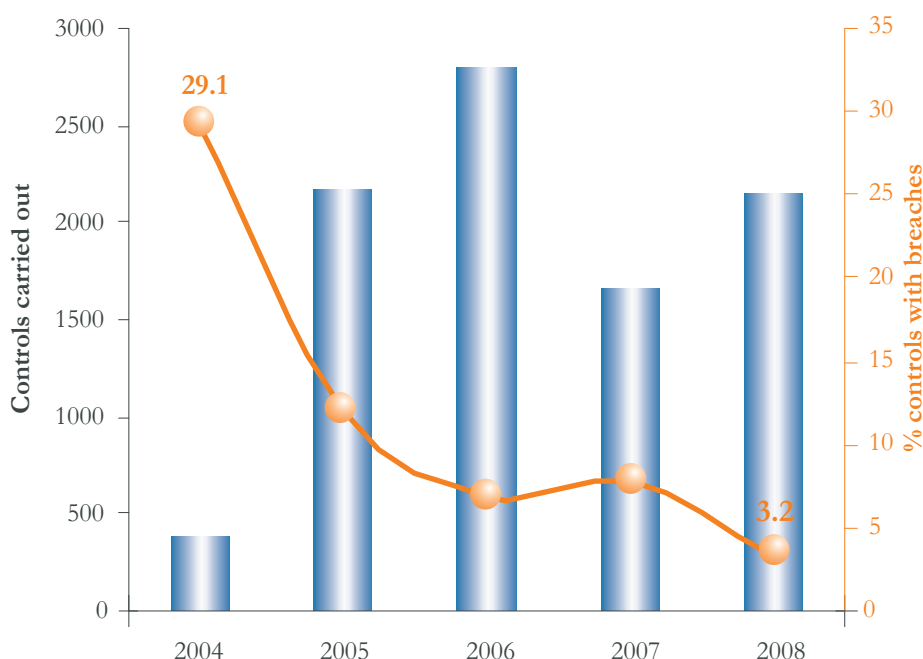
safety.

In Veneto, the European slogan "From the Farm to the Fork" has fostered closer cooperation between the different sectors of the food supply-chain. Its policies have been implemented with the Three-year Plan for Food Safety via the funding and development of a series of coordinated measures that involve the regional planning bodies at the Department for Health, Farming and Environmental Policies, alongside regional epidemiological observatories (CREV and SER), public-health control bodies (ULSS, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale, A.R.P.A.V.), private organisations (producers, Veneto Agricoltura) and universities (for hygiene, nutrition and veterinary aspects).

ANIMAL HEALTH

The health and traceability of animals involved in the food-production process is the first stage of controls on the supply chain. The key issues on which these controls hinge are animal traceability, developing biosafety protocols on animal farms, ensuring the correct use of veterinary medication, animal welfare, and promoting the correct management and disposal of animal by-products (National By-product Plan).

Controls on livestock farms to ensure compliance with cattle identification standards. Veneto - Year 2008



Animal traceability

The key to tracing animals and animal by-products lies in the region's Livestock Registry Database (BDR), which is connected via a real-time web-link with the National Database (BDN) in Teramo, in the Abruzzo region. This system also enables the region to manage autonomously all the information on health, animal husbandry and animal economics, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy support schemes it needs for its regional plans. Controls on Veneto's livestock farms and abattoirs, which ensure standards on cattle traceability and identification are observed, reveal a consistent decline in irregularities: in 2008 irregularities in livestock farms were 3%, with 0% in abattoirs, which has been the case since 2004.

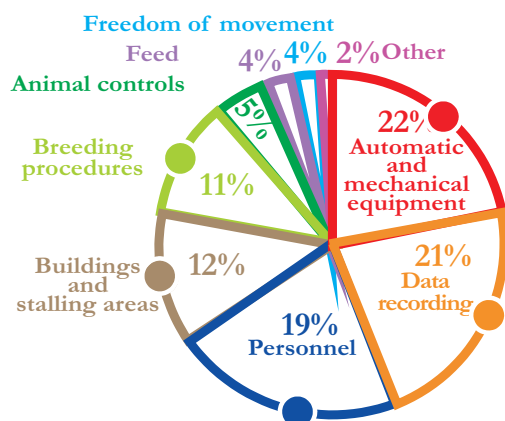
Source: processing by Regione Veneto - Direzione Sistema Statistico Regionale, Unità di Progetto, Sanità Animale e Igiene Alimentare on Regione Veneto data.

Animal welfare: inspections on farms and sanctions taken. Veneto - Year 2008

Species	No. livestock farms	Livestock farms inspected	Breaches	Sanctions
White-meat calves	536	159	203	1
Other calves (*)		313		
Adult cattle	3,436	548	140	0
Pigs	624	263	87	0
Broilers	962	85	26	0
Turkeys and other poultry	898	50	18	0
Egg-laying chickens	143	59	12	4
Rabbits	490	78	11	0
Fish	288	14	6	0
Horses	443	39	3	0
Sheep	117	21	2	0
Goats	46	24	2	0
Ostriches	34	2	1	0
Buffalos	10	2	0	0
Fur animals	7	3	0	0
Total	8,034	1,660	511	5

(*) Controls on "Other calves" refer to animals on both farms for "White-meat calves" and "Adult cattle".

Animal welfare: distribution of breaches by type. Veneto - Year 2008



Animal welfare

An improvement in quality of life has led, especially in industrialised countries, to greater care being taken of "income animals", which are no longer treated solely as a source of services and nutrition as today the ethology and physiology specific to each breed are also being taken into due consideration.

The public has become aware that we do not only have to look after animal health and hygiene, but also to take greater care of their biological needs, behavioural patterns and general welfare.

In recent years, society's greater awareness and sensibility towards animals has led national and international institutions to pass laws that recognise the dignity of animals.

The Veterinary Services of the Local Health Authorities (ULSS) conduct inspections on livestock farms to check that animal welfare standards are met, in accordance with regional plans. Since August 2008 checks at regional level have been based on ministerial check-lists included in the national plan.

In 2008, more than 20% of Veneto's 8000-plus farms were inspected: 511 breaches were discovered, more than half of which involved non-compliance with equipment, data recording and personnel training; only 5 led to further sanctions being taken.

FOOD CONTROLS

Official inspections on food and drink aim to ensure that products come up to standard in order to prevent risks to public health, protect consumer interests and ensure transactions are above board. The controls cover both Italian and foreign products that are sold throughout the country, as well as those destined for export. Official inspections cover all phases of production, processing, storage, transport, sale and administration. They encompass making checks, taking samples, conducting laboratory analysis, inspecting hygiene and personnel, examining hand-written and printed documents, as well as a company's inspection systems and their results. Under the regulations of the Hygiene Package, EU legislation defines official food controls and establishes that the frequency of controls is carried out in accordance with risk analysis; in Veneto, control schedules are defined by Regional Decree DDR no. 292/2007 and subsequent amendments. For the controls on retail outlets, the Presidential Decree of 14 July 1995 gives the regions and provinces the power to establish and coordinate policy for the implementation of official food and beverage control plans.

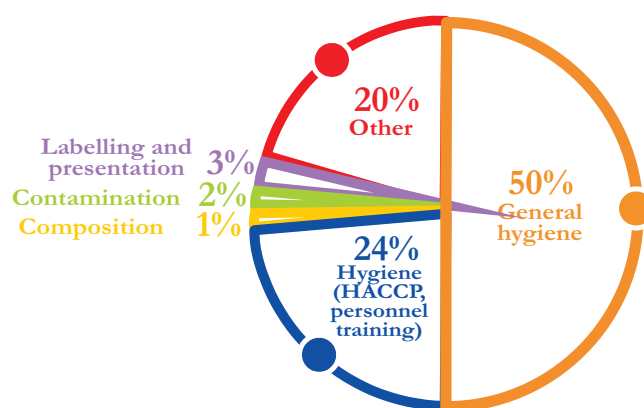
The official controls cover:

- primary producers: premises that only carry out primary production and produce unprocessed food products for human consumption (e.g. farm businesses dealing with primary production, livestock, poultry, vineyards, bees, etc.);
- producers and packagers: premises where food is produced, processed and/or packaged, but not sold retail;
- wholesale distribution: includes distribution activities before retail sale, (e.g. import, wholesale or wholesale storage, distribution to retailers, restaurants etc.);
- retail distribution: includes all types of commerce for sale to end consumers (e.g. market stalls, supermarkets, food stores, mail order etc.);
- transport: encompasses vehicles and containers;
- public catering: includes all forms of catering that are carried out in public places and that serve end consumers (e.g. restaurants, rotisseries, bars, wine-cellars, etc.);
- institutional and care-home catering: includes forms of catering that serve an identifiable end consumer (e.g. company canteens, schools, hospitals, prisons, colleges, etc.);
- producers and packagers that mainly sell retail: includes activities whereby a product is processed and "mainly" sold to the end consumer by the producer (e.g. butchers, bakers, pastry chefs, ice-cream makers, etc.).

Official controls on food products - Number of units inspected and units with breaches per operator type.
Veneto - Year 2008

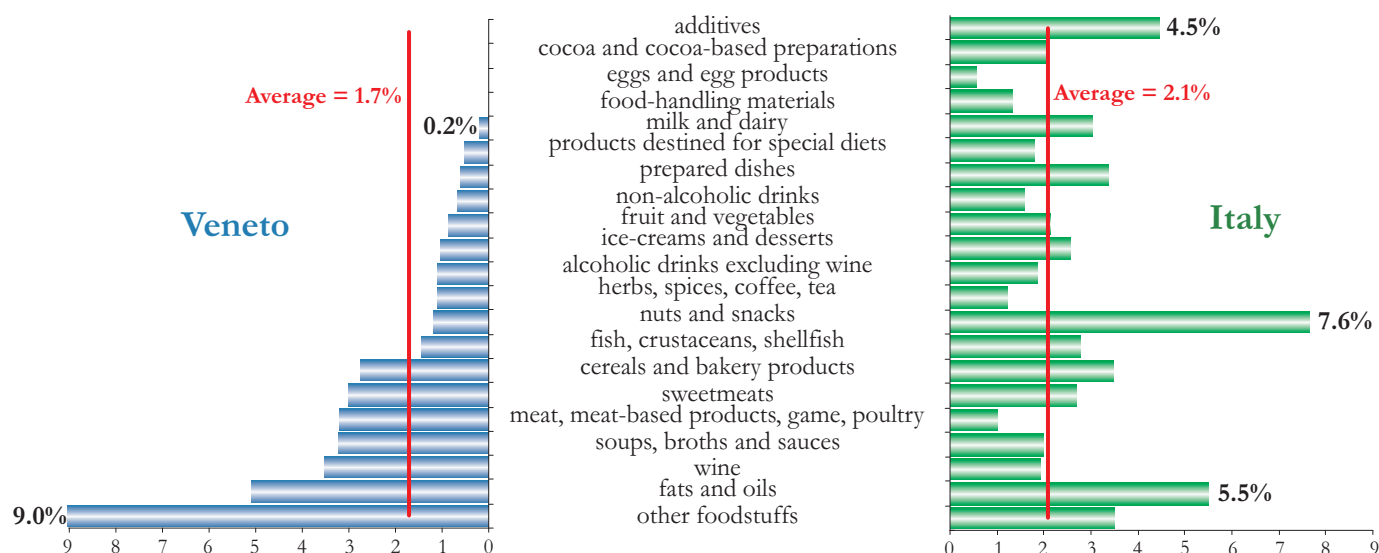
	Number of units inspected	Units inspected	Units with breaches	% units with breaches
primary producers	40,044	26,845	346	1.3
producers and packagers	4,137	1,852	206	11.1
wholesale distribution	3,315	1,307	100	7.7
retail distribution	19,321	5,567	295	5.3
transport	8,918	2,998	22	0.7
public catering	40,704	5,429	849	15.6
institutional catering	6,334	1,757	116	6.6
producers and packagers retail	11,387	3,694	242	6.6
Total	134,160	49,449	2,176	4.4

% distribution of breaches by type.
Veneto - Year 2008



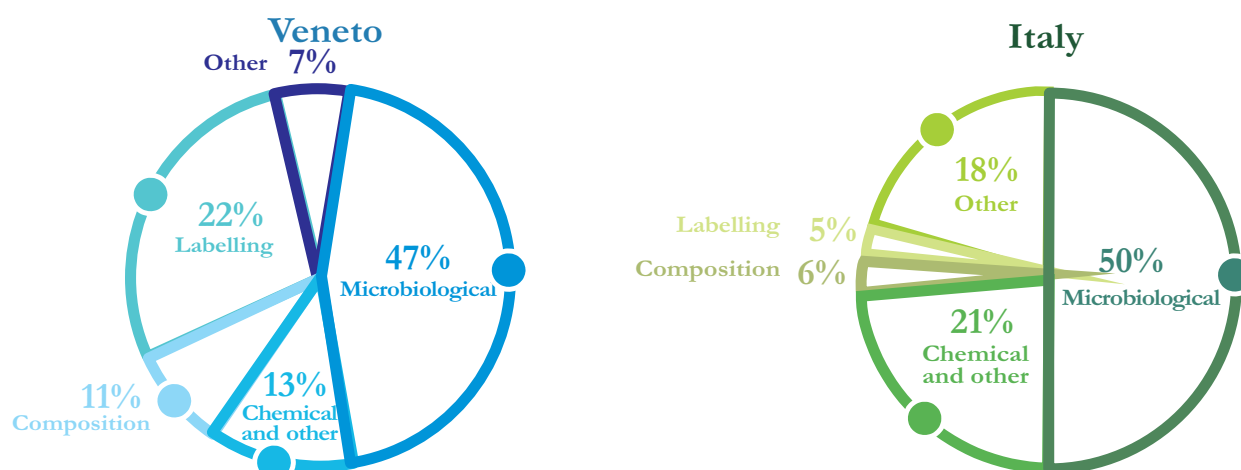
Veneto has 130,000-plus operators that are eligible for inspection, and more than one-third of its operators were inspected in 2008; out of these, 4.4% committed breaches, mainly in general hygiene, in the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points system (HACCP) and in personnel training. The percentage of breaches was not only lower than national level (4.7%), but had also fallen on recent years (5.7% in 2007 and 6% in 2000).

Percentage of breaches by type of food sample.Veneto and Italy - Year 2008



In recent years, the percentage of irregular samples discovered by the Experimental Zoo-Prophylactic Agencies of the Venezia regions and the Regional Environmental Protection Agencies has been consistently below 2%; more than 12,000 samples were analysed in 2008 and 1.7% were irregular, lower than the Italian average of 2.1%

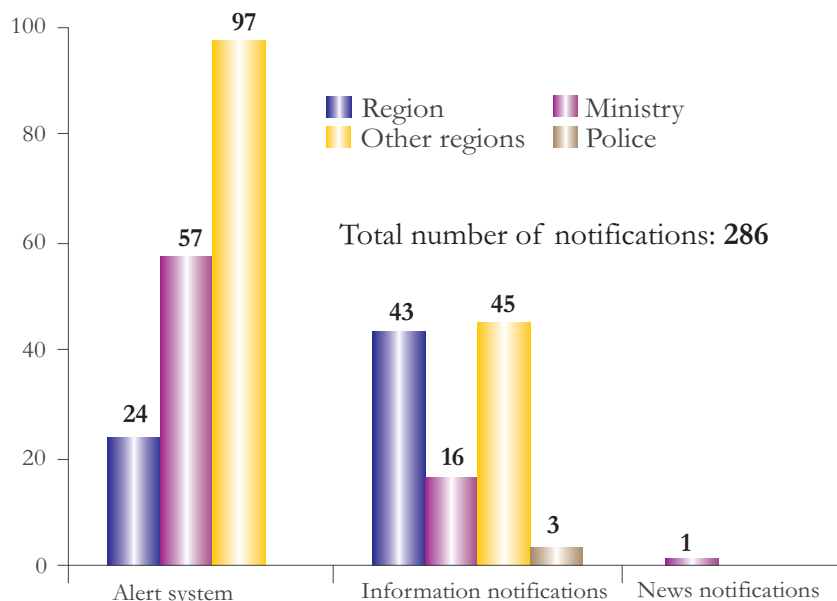
% distribution of breaches in food samples by type. Veneto and Italy - Year 2008



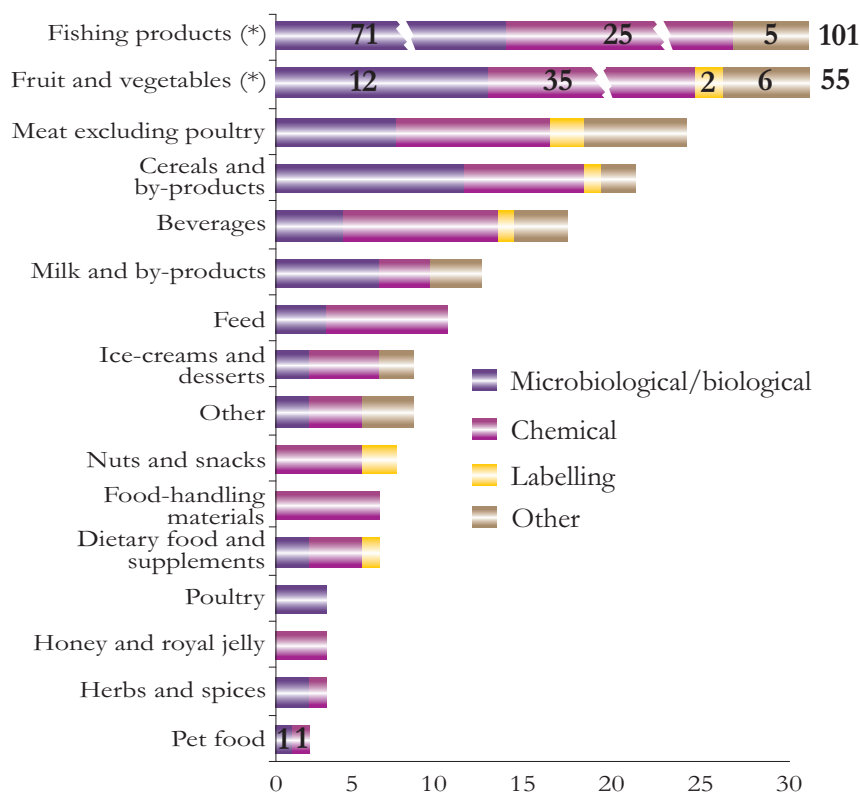
Around half of the breaches were found to be of a microbiological nature, both for Italy and for Veneto; in second place, in Veneto, were problems with product labelling or presentation (22% of cases), whereas in Italy it was chemical contamination (21% of cases).

RAPID ALERT SYSTEM

Notifications dealt with by Veneto by type and source of notification. Veneto - Year 2008



Notifications dealt with by Veneto by type and product. Veneto - Year 2008



(*) The columns for "Microbiological/Biological" and "Chemical" notifications are out of scale to ensure the graph is legible

The rapid alert system is a network where information can be exchanged quickly in order to notify the public in the event of serious risk to human health due to food or feed. The alert system is triggered whenever the medical and/or Veterinary Service at the ASL, or the local departments of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies receive information about food or feed that pose a serious threat to human or animal health, or to the environment.

Notifications are divided into the following types:

- Alert notifications: sent in the event of situations posing a serious threat to consumer health;
- Information notifications: triggered only for products that are not currently on the market, or for cases in which products do not pose a serious threat to consumer and/or animal health. In such cases, no immediate measures need to be taken;
- News notifications: related to the safety of food and feed and used to disseminate information about particular health and hygiene issues that may be considered of interest.

In 2008, Veneto dealt with 286 notifications. These notifications may have been triggered by the region itself following an information notification regarding food, feed and food-handling materials in Veneto, or managed by the region, but triggered following an information notification from other regions or other EU Member States.

The alert system requires the producer to withdraw or recall any products that are deemed dangerous for human or animal health.

If there is a serious and immediate risk (e.g. botulinum toxin), police and regional health departments are authorised to impound products immediately. This emergency procedure may also be combined with a press release. In this case, the public is informed about the risk of consuming a certain product and how to return the foodstuff to the local health authority. This procedure affords consumers peace of mind regarding the health and safety of Italian products as well as those that arrive from across the world.

Source: processing by Regione Veneto - Direzione Sistema Statistico Regionale, Unità di Progetto Sanità Animale e Igiene Alimentare on Regione Veneto data

In accordance with Regional Law no. 8 of 2002, Ufficio di Statistica della Regione Veneto gathers, analyses and disseminates statistical information for the region. The processed data herein is the patrimony of the entire region and is published in brochures and on the Regione Veneto website at www.regione.veneto.it/statistica.

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