



Dairy food hygiene legislative framework

1. Responsibilities in the General Food Law

The dairy chain works according to regulations set by the European Union, based on **the European Regulation No. 178/2002 known as the General Food Law (GFL)**, including:

	<p>Hygiene rules for production of feed</p> 	<p>Hygiene rules for production of food</p> 	<p>Specific rules for production of food from animal origin</p> 
Control authorities & departments	<p>Regulation No. 2017/625 on Official Controls <small>see pg. 3</small></p>		<p>Regulation No. 2019/627</p>
Food Business Operators	<p>Regulation No. 183/2005</p>	<p>Regulation No. 852/2004</p>	<p>Regulation No. 853/2004</p>

The General Food Law covers the entire agri-food sector, i.e. 'from farm to fork', and all stages of production, processing and distribution of food and feed. [1]

Operators

- Ensuring that all stages for which they are responsible are carried out hygienically
- Traceability
- Withdrawal of non-compliant food + info consumer
- Information to competent authorities + collaboration

Members States

- Enforcement of food law and Official controls
- Public communication on food safety and risk



2. Specific rules for production of food from animal origin

Animal Health, on farm hygiene and criteria for raw milk

Regulation 853/2004 [2] regulates some animal diseases (brucellosis, tuberculosis) [3] and drug use on the farm, and housing for the dairy herd. Adequate hygiene at milk production holdings is also crucial for safe milk. To prevent milk to be contaminated with dirt or microbes:

Raw milk is the milk produced by the secretion of the mammary gland of farmed animals that has not been heated to more than 40 °C or undergone any treatment that has an equivalent effect.



...the **cow** must be kept in good hygienic conditions;

...the **dairy farm premises** and **equipment** must be well maintained and sanitised (i.e. milking machine, milking parlour and milking robot);



...and there are also procedures for the **disposal of manure, trash and dangerous substances** to abide by.

In addition, the quality of milk is maintained to the highest standards through proper refrigeration and cooling during storage and transport. Hygienic procedures for the transport encompass pickup and delivery, design, construction, installation and maintenance of milk tankers, cleaning and disinfection, and overall documentation.

Storage temperature, heat treatment, criteria for raw milk, traceability

Just like for raw milk production, its processing is also regulated by EU law – namely the General Food Law, the hygiene package and other EU regulations (e.g. Regulations 2073/2005 [4], 315/93 [5], 396/2005 [6], 37/2010 [7]) covering a broad range of issues including microbiological criteria and contamination of food, pesticides and veterinary medicines' residues.

Inside each dairy company the legislation is translated into specific **HACCP** plans (► [see our factsheet on "The high food safety requirements in the dairy sector"](#)) considering the specificity of each product and production line.

Wrapping and packaging	Labelling	Identification marking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sealing of consumers packages right after filling • Specific requirements for the sealing system and device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for the use of the term "raw milk" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traceability measures

3. Official Controls

The EU General Food Law states the primary legal responsibility of the food and feed business operators for ensuring food safety at all stages of production, processing and distribution within the businesses under their control. Simultaneously, Member States are responsible for enforcing EU food law, and monitoring and verifying that food and feed business operators fulfil the relevant requirements. [8] For this purpose, Member States maintain a system of official controls and other activities as appropriate to the circumstances, including public communication on food and feed safety and risk, food and feed safety surveillance and other monitoring activities covering all stages of production, processing and distribution.

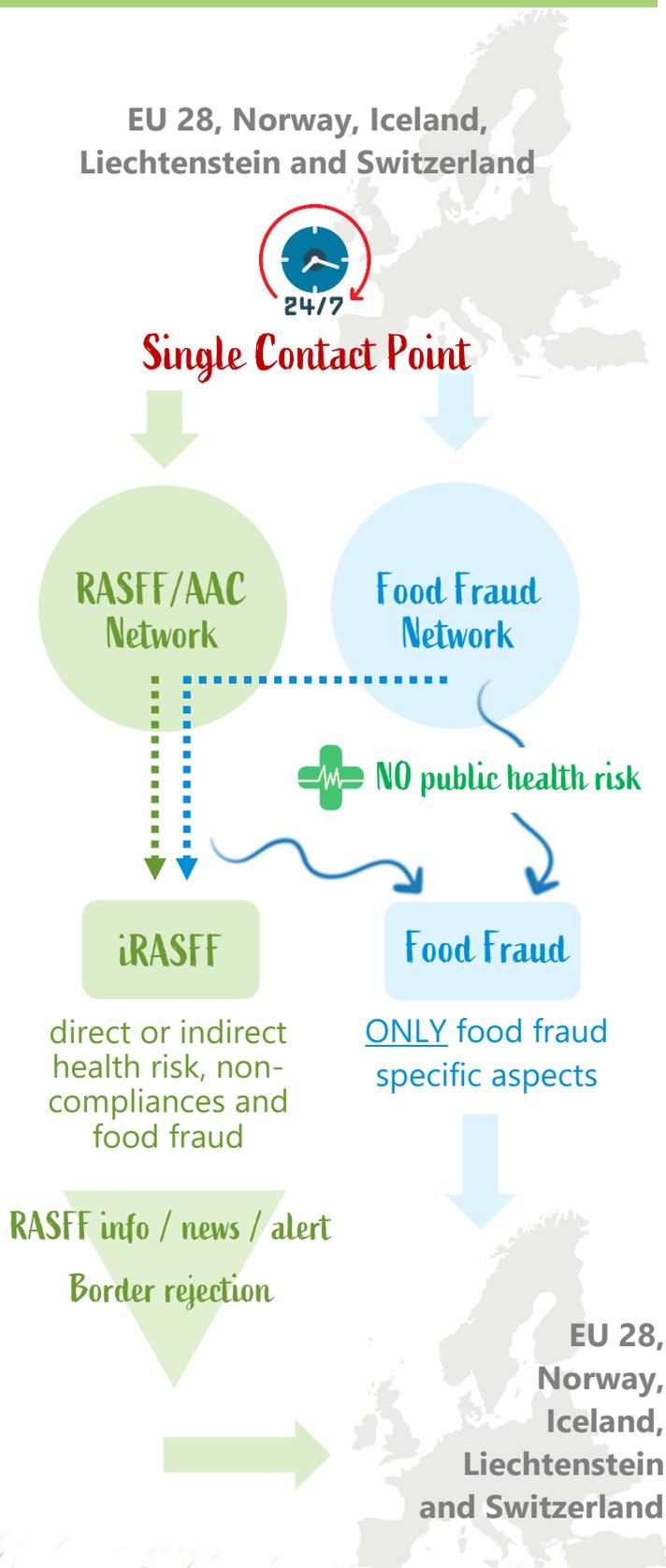
Sectors covered by the Regulation N° 2017/625 on Official Controls ^[9]



European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The European Rapid Alert System (RASFF) is a network for the swift exchange of information relating to food and feed risks, EU-wide or national emergency measures, as well as the establishment of a comprehensive plan for crisis management. [1]

Within the milk and dairy processing industry we deal with a very nutritious and natural, but perishable, 'raw material': milk. This increases the number of critical control points within the process – and frequently RASFF notifications are issued by information provided to competent authorities by food operators themselves. Still an alert does not mean that a threat is real: alerts can and should be done in case of suspicion, and often can be closed quite quickly. Food safety issues have become increasingly rare.



References

1. EU Commission Infographic, The General Food Law: Fitness Check, 2018, see [link](#)
2. Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, see [link](#)
3. Other animal diseases are regulated in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law'), see [link](#)
4. Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 of 15 November 2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, see [link](#)
5. Council Regulation (EEC) No 315/93 of 8 February 1993 laying down Community procedures for contaminants in food, see [link](#)
6. Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC, see [link](#)
7. Commission Regulation (EU) No 37/2010 of 22 December 2009 on pharmacologically active substances and their classification regarding maximum residue limits in foodstuffs of animal origin, see [link](#)
8. Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, see [link](#)
9. Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products, see [link](#)

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