2026 food audit programme: non-EU countries targeted for controls

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EU food audit programme for 2026: Mid-year update

European Commission: Health and food audits – Programme July to December 2026

Update

The European Commission has updated its programme of health and food audits from July to December 2026. It takes account of changes that have become necessary as the year progressed.

In relation to AGRINFO partner countries, the following audits are planned for the second half of 2026, each focusing on specific sectors within the following scope: Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, China, Costa Rica, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe.

Impacted products

All

What is changing?

The European Commission performs “controls” (audits and remote assessments) of European Union (EU) Member States and non-EU countries to ensure they have official control systems in place to guarantee that food put on the EU market meets EU rules for food safety, and for plant and animal health. The EU Vision for Agriculture and Food 2025–2029 includes an intention to strengthen import controls.

Audits

Audits are planned for the following AGRINFO partner countries, focusing on the sectors listed.

EU enlargement

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- Moldova – official controls in the agri-food chain; pesticides and contaminants; animal health, animal welfare, and animal by-products; food safety
- Montenegro – plant health

Animal health

- China – poultry (meat, eggs, and products)
- Paraguay – cattle meat products

Food safety

- Bangladesh – residues and contaminants in products of animal origin
- Cabo Verde – fishery products
- China – poultry and rabbit meat products; fishery products (fish oil only); food contact materials from recycled plastic
- India – food contact materials from recycled plastic
- Madagascar – pesticides in food of plant origin
- Malaysia – fishery products
- Nigeria – fishery products
- Panama – fishery products, including fish oil
- Papua New Guinea – fishery products
- Senegal – fishery products
- Solomon Islands – fishery products
- Tunisia – residues and contaminants in animals and animal products
- Türkiye – contaminants in pistachios and dried figs; residues and contaminants in products of animal origin
- Viet Nam – live bivalve molluscs

Plant health

- China – planting materials
- Costa Rica – planting materials
- Uganda – plants and plant products
- Zimbabwe – plants and plant products (citrus fruits)

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How are audits conducted?

Firstly, a pre-audit questionnaire is sent to the competent authorities and the responses are analysed. The audit team then meets with national, regional, and local authorities, and carries out visits to relevant sites to see how the competent authority controls are implemented. An audit typically involves two auditors. The Commission issues a report after each audit, which may include recommendations to the competent authority to address any systemic or significant non-compliances that have been identified.

Audits can also be carried out remotely. Such desk-based audits (called remote assessments) are based on comprehensive questionnaires.

Audits for countries that are not within the scope of the AGRINFO programme are not covered in this report. Full lists of audits to be conducted in 2026 are set out in Health and food audits – Programme July to December 2026:

- Audits of countries that are candidates for EU enlargement are planned from July to December 2026 (Annex 2)
- Audits of third [non-EU] countries planned from July to December 2026 (Annex 3).

Why?

Control systems in EU Member States, and in non-EU countries, are continually monitored to guarantee effective enforcement of EU requirements on food safety, and on plant and animal health.

Timeline

The updated programme covers audits and controls planned from **July to December 2026**.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

A negative outcome of an audit or remote assessment performed by the European Commission in a non-EU country may result in the imposition of trade-restrictive measures. This is to protect European consumers and/or animal and plant health, as well as to encourage the authorities and food business operators concerned to quickly take action and implement any necessary corrective measures. Examples of trade-restrictive measures include increased checks at EU borders and, as a last resort, suspension of imports. The Commission reviews such measures periodically.

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Recommended Actions

EU audits are greatly facilitated when exporting countries provide comprehensive responses to questionnaires (including for remote assessments), and prepare for an audit with detailed and organised records. This involves documenting all procedures, controls, and corrective actions that are taken to align with EU requirements. EU auditors require accessible evidence of system improvements, training logs, health and safety checks, and traceability systems. Conducting regular internal reviews and updating compliance strategies helps to demonstrate ongoing adherence to EU requirements.

Background

Article 120 of the Official Controls Regulation (2017/625) allows the European Commission to perform audits and remote assessments in non-EU countries. These play a central role in the decision on whether or not to include a non-EU country in the list of countries permitted to export animals and animal products to the EU. The audits and assessments also allow the EU to check the systems in place in non-EU countries that are exporting food, feed, animals, or plants to the EU. The Commission targets countries according to the level of risk associated with their exports and takes into account the volume of exports, non-compliant consignments identified at EU points of entry, and higher levels of risk associated with particular types of food, feed, animals, or plants.

These audits are also opportunities to foster international cooperation, share best practice, and encourage continuous improvement in global food safety standards.

Resources

Online resources on food safety from the European Commission:

- Videos on audit preparation, reporting and monitoring, and how recommendations are addressed – various languages available
- Audit reports
- Audit map

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 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 (Official Controls Regulation)

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Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 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 (General Food Law)

Regulation (EU) 2016/429 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (Animal Health Law)

Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on protective measures against pests of plants (Plant Health Law)

Sources

European Commission: Health and food audits – Programme July to December 2026

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