Amendments to hygiene requirements for fishery products, eggs and highly refined animal products

Published by AGRINFO on 04 Jan 2023

European Commission amends and corrects Regulations regarding hygiene requirements for fishery products, eggs and highly refined products of animal origin

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2258 of 9 September 2022 amending and correcting Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific hygiene requirements for food of animal origin as regards fishery products, eggs and certain highly refined products, and amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/624 as regards certain bivalve molluscs

Update

A new Regulation amends and corrects the specific hygiene requirements for certain fishery products, eggs and highly refined animal products, and for certain live bivalve molluscs.

Impacted products

eggs, fishery products, highly refined products of animal origin

What is changing?

The EU is amending Annex III to Regulation 853/2004, which lays down rules on the hygiene of foods of animal origin for business operators. In particular, this new Delegated Regulation:

- corrects the reference to the certificate referred to in Annex III, Regulation 853/2004 for poultry slaughtered at the farm
- modifies Regulations 853/2044 and 2019/624, removing the requirement to classify production and relaying areas for all echinoderms that are not filter feeders (e.g. sea cucumbers and sea urchins)
- allows the use of superchilling under certain conditions for the transport of fresh fishery products
- allows the use of tubs for transporting whole and gutted fresh fishery products in water and ice after their arrival at the first establishment on land (other than transport/ sorting facilities)
- extends the minimum shelf-life of eggs produced by hens (Gallus gallus) from 21 to 28 days

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- classifies cholesterol and vitamin D3 derived from lanolin, and flavourings derived from products of animal origin, as highly refined products (i.e. low risk profile).

Why?

- This Delegated Regulation is linked to Regulation 2021/1756 regarding official controls on animals and animal products. For consistency, amendments to both Regulations take effect on the same date.
- The requirement to classify production and relaying areas for echinoderms is removed because no epidemiological information has been reported which could link public health risks to echinoderms that are not filter feeders (Regulation 2021/1756 amending Regulation 2017/625).

Timeline

Date of publication: 18 November 2022

Enters into effect: 8 December 2022

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

There are no major implications for exporters of fish products to the EU beyond considering improved chilling techniques for transportation and storage. Regulation 853/2004 already provides that whole and gutted fresh fishery products may be transported and stored in cooled water until they arrive at the first establishment on land (other than transport/ sorting facilities). The amendment only applies to fresh fishery products *after* they arrive at the first establishment on land.

Recommended Actions

- Exporters of fish products to the EU may consider adopting new and improved chilling techniques for transporting and storing their fresh fishery products.
- Exporters of hen eggs to the EU should be aware that their shelf-life is extended from 21 to 28 days.
- Exporters to the EU of echinoderms (e.g. sea cucumbers and sea urchins) that are not filter feeders are no longer required to classify their production and relaying areas (“clean” areas free of microbiological contamination, approved for growth and harvest).

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- Exporters of poultry slaughtered at the farm must ensure they use the correct official certificate (see EU official health certificates explained). Annex III to Regulation 853/2004 refers to the wrong certificate.

Background

Under the umbrella of the General Food Law (EC/178/2002), Regulation 853/2004 lays down the specific hygiene requirements for foods of animal origin.

The EU legislation can be amended to adapt to new techniques and the latest scientific knowledge. Changes are decided by the EU Commission (the risk manager) in consultation with experts and, when required, based on EFSA opinions (the risk assessor).

- EFSA (2020) adopted a Scientific Opinion in favour of the use of tubs (boxes of three-layered polyethylene) for transporting and storing fresh fishery products, and gave some recommendations for their use, filled with water and ice. New techniques such as transport in boxes without ice and new chilling techniques are now also available.
- EFSA (2021) adopted a Scientific Opinion on the use of superchilling, which is now allowed under certain conditions for the transport of fresh fishery products.
- EFSA (2014) assessed that the date of minimum durability (shelf-life) for eggs can be extended from 21 to 28 days without increasing the risk for the consumer, significantly reducing food waste at retail level.

Resources

EFSA (2014) Scientific Opinion on the public health risks of table eggs due to deterioration and development of pathogens. EFSA Journal, 12(7): 3782.

EFSA (2020) The use of the so■called ‘tubs’ for transporting and storing fresh fishery products. EFSA Journal, 18(4): 6091.

EFSA (2021) The use of the so■called ‘superchilling’ technique for the transport of fresh fishery products. EFSA Journal, 19(1): 6378.

Sources

Delegated Regulation 2019/624

Implementation Regulation 2020/2235

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Regulation 853/2004

Regulation 2017/625

Regulation 2021/1756

Regulation (EU) 2022/2258

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