EU Health and food audits and analysis programme 2024

Published by AGRINFO on 14 Mar 2024

2024 Programme of EU controls of non-EU countries exporting to the EU

European Union Health and food audits and analysis programme 2024

Update

The European Commission conducts regular controls (audits and remote assessments) of EU Member States and non-EU countries to ensure the highest standards of food safety and regulatory compliance of goods put on the EU market. This document highlights audits planned for 2024 in non-EU countries, including audits in Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Iran, Kosovo, Montenegro, Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, and Vietnam. In addition, remote assessments via questionnaires will cover 20 countries, including the 13 countries that export only honey to the EU. Other countries may also be added throughout the year.

Impacted products

All

What is changing?

The European Commission performs controls (audits and remote assessments) of European Member States and non-EU countries to ensure they have systems in place that guarantee food put on the EU market meets EU rules for food safety and plant and animal health. The European Commission has published the following programme for 2024.

Audits

The following audits of non-EU countries are planned, each focusing on specific sectors/topics.

Plant Health

- Cameroon – mangoes (phytosanitary conditions)
- Egypt – potatoes (phytosanitary conditions).

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Animal health

- Argentina – beef
- Brazil – poultry
- Kosovo (official framework for animal health controls for accession into the EU)
- Thailand – horse.

Food

- Brazil – safety of fishery products; residues of veterinary drugs, pesticides, and contaminants in food of animal origin; safety and traceability of animal by-products
- Bosnia and Herzegovina – safety of poultry meat and products thereof
- China – pesticide residue controls in plant-based food; safety and traceability of animal by-products
- Colombia – safety of fishery products
- Egypt – microbiological safety of plant-based food
- India – pesticide residue controls in plant-based food; safety of fishery products
- Mexico – safety of horse meat
- Morocco – safety and traceability of animal by-products
- Montenegro – safety of beef, lamb, and pork meat
- Paraguay – safety of beef and casings
- Peru – safety of fishery products
- Serbia – safety of milk and dairy products
- South Africa – residues of veterinary drugs, pesticides, and contaminants in food of animal origin
- Türkiye – contaminants in plant-based food
- Uganda – microbiological safety of plant-based food
- Vietnam – residues of veterinary drugs, pesticides, and contaminants in food of animal origin
- Iran – contaminants in plant-based food.

Lists of control activities to be conducted in 2024 are set out in Annexes:

- Annex 1: controls by priority theme of the multi-annual plan (for some of these controls, the countries have not yet been identified)
- Annex 3: controls planned in 2024 by country relating to candidate /potential candidate countries
- Annex 4: controls planned in 2024 relating to non-EU countries.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

How are audits conducted?

An audit typically involves two auditors. They first send pre-audit questionnaires to competent authorities and analyse the responses. The audit team then meets with national, regional, and local authorities as well as carrying out visits to relevant sites to see how competent authority controls are implemented. 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.

Remote assessments

The Commission also performs desk-based audits based on comprehensive questionnaires, called “remote assessments”. These remote assessments check that official controls carried out by the competent authorities of listed non-EU countries are appropriate to verify the compliance of exported animals and foods with EU requirements, and to reliably certify compliance with those requirements when signing official certificates.

All residue control plans of non-EU countries also must be checked at least once every 5 years. The current 5-year cycle ends in 2025, so non-EU countries that have not yet been checked can expect remote assessments either in 2024 or 2025.

In 2024, 20 non-EU countries will have remote assessments, including the 13 non-EU countries listed solely for honey (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Pitcairn Islands, Rwanda, Togo, Uganda, Wallis and Futuna, Zambia).

Why?

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

Timeline

This document highlights the audits and remote assessments planned for 2024.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

A negative outcome of an audit or remote assessment performed by the 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 take action and implement any necessary corrective measures quickly. 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.

Recommended Actions

EU audits are greatly facilitated when exporting countries provide comprehensive responses to questionnaires (including for remote assessments), and when they 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 (EU 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 market. They 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; this considers 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

Videos (FR–SP) on audit preparation; reporting & monitoring and how recommendations are addressed – various languages available.

Audit report

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Audit map

OCR: Official Control Regulation (EU) 2017/625

General Food Law (EC 178/2002)

Animal Health Law (EU 2016/429)

Plant Health Law (EU 2016/2031)

Sources

European Union Health and food audits and analysis programme 2024

Visit the AGRINFO website to view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

Disclaimer: *Under no circumstances shall COLEAD be liable for any loss, damage, liability or expense incurred or suffered that is claimed to have resulted from the use of information available on this website or any link to external sites. The use of the website is at the user's sole risk and responsibility. This information platform was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents do not, however, reflect the views of the European Union.*

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*