Official controls: Sampling of veterinary medicine residues in animal products and feed

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EU updates requirements for controls of veterinary medicine residues in animal products and feed

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/731 of 27 March 2026 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/808 as regards its transitional provisions and certain provisions on sampling

Update

The European Union (EU) has updated its rules on the procedures for sampling veterinary medicine residues during official controls of animal products and feed. The new Regulation extends the procedures already in place for animal products to cover feed. It allows official control laboratories more time (until 31 December 2027) to adapt and validate analytical methods. Additionally, it reduces the sample size for ostrich eggs.

Impacted products

Animals and animal products, feed of animal origin

What is changing?

For animals and animal products exported to the EU, competent authorities must follow certain procedures when undertaking official checks of veterinary medicine residues set out in Regulation 2021/808.

This Regulation is being amended to:

- extend the procedures for handling and reporting on samples that are already in place for animal products to also include feed
- give more time to reference laboratories to adapt and validate some of the analytical methods set out in Regulation 2021/808 – this process should have been completed by 10 June 2026, but laboratories now have until 31 December 2027

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- in the case of analysing ostrich eggs, allow a minimum sample size of one egg rather than the standard 12 eggs.

Why?

While sampling procedures were already established for controlling veterinary medicine residues in animal products, no procedures were in place for testing feed.

Many official control laboratories require more time to validate their analytical methods in line with Regulation 2021/808.

As ostrich eggs are much larger than hens' eggs, fewer eggs are needed for the purposes of sampling.

Timeline

This Regulation applies from **19 April 2026**.

Background

The Official Controls Regulation 2017/625 states that competent authorities have to perform official controls, at any stage of production, processing, and distribution, on residues of relevant substances in food and feed (including substances to be used in food contact materials, contaminants, non-authorised, prohibited, and undesirable substances).

Delegated Regulation 2022/2292 supplements the Official Controls Regulation regarding specific public health requirements for food-producing animals and animal products exported to the EU.

Commission Regulation 37/2010 sets maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pharmacologically active substances in foodstuffs of animal origin.

Implementing Regulation 2021/808 complements Regulations 2022/1644 and 2022/1646. It lays down rules concerning methods of sampling and laboratory analyses for residues of pharmacologically active substances in live food-producing animals, their body parts and fluids, excrements, tissues, products of animal origin, animal by-products, feed, and water. It also includes rules for interpretation of analytical results.

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Resources

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 with regard to requirements for the entry into the Union of consignments of food-producing animals and certain goods intended for human consumption

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1646 on uniform practical arrangements for the performance of official controls as regards the use of pharmacologically active substances authorised as veterinary medicinal products or as feed additives and of prohibited or unauthorised pharmacologically active substances and residues thereof, on specific content of multi-annual national control plans and specific arrangements for their preparation

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1644 with specific requirements for the performance of official controls on the use of pharmacologically active substances authorised as veterinary medicinal products or as feed additives and of prohibited or unauthorised pharmacologically active substances and residues thereof

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/808 on the performance of analytical methods for residues of pharmacologically active substances used in food-producing animals and on the interpretation of results as well as on the methods to be used for sampling

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

Commission Regulation (EU) No 37/2010 on pharmacologically active substances and their classification regarding maximum residue limits in foodstuffs of animal origin

Sources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/731 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/808 as regards its transitional provisions and certain provisions on sampling

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