Simplification of EU food and feed safety rules

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EU proposes simplified food and feed safety rules to reduce costs and burdens for operators and authorities

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, (EC) No 1829/2003, (EC) No 1831/2003, (EC) No 852/2004, (EC) No 853/2004, (EC) No 396/2005, (EC) No 1099/2009, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) 2017/625 as regards the simplification and strengthening of food and feed safety requirements

Update

The European Commission proposes to simplify a large number of existing rules (an initiative referred to as the "EU Food and Feed Safety Omnibus"), including:

- authorisation and renewal procedures for pesticides and biocidal products for use in the European Union (EU)
- clarifications of terminology and transitional measures related to pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs)
- authorisations and labelling requirements for feed additives
- a surveillance and risk management framework for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)
- flexibility in official checks of plant consignments at border control posts
- clarification of the legal status of fermentation products manufactured using genetically modified micro-organisms (GMMs).

The aim is to reduce the burdens and costs of the current EU food and feed safety rules for operators and competent authorities.

What is changing?

The European Commission proposes to review and simplify a large number of existing rules on food and feed safety. The key changes are summarised here.

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Pesticides and biopesticides (Regulation (EC) 1107/2009)

Currently, the EU must re-evaluate all approved pesticides every 10 years. The European Commission proposes to remove this requirement, although reapproval would still be required in some specific cases. This will allow the authorities that evaluate applications for approval or renewal of pesticides more time to focus on biopesticides. The Commission also proposes to clarify the definition of biopesticides (as "biocontrol substances"), and to allow EU Member States to grant provisional approval of these substances on the basis of draft assessments.

Why? EU farmers have fewer tools to fight pests and diseases as older pesticides lose their authorisation, and the procedure to approve new alternatives (particularly biopesticides) takes time. The EU aims to encourage the transition from chemical pesticides to more sustainable solutions.

For further details, see Simplification of rules on pesticide MRLs and approvals.

Maximum residue levels (Regulation 396/2005)

The Commission aims to align the rules that apply to imported products more closely with those that apply to production within the EU. The proposed changes make it possible to reduce existing maximum residue levels (MRLs) to 0.01 mg/kg (the limit of quantification, LOQ) on pesticides not approved in the EU that are categorised as particularly hazardous for public health or the environment. This could reduce the pesticide options ("toolbox") currently available to non-EU suppliers to the EU market. The Commission also proposes to clarify the rules on transition periods, allowing products that were compliant with EU MRLs at the time of production or when placed on the EU market to be sold until the end of their shelf-life. This would avoid products being removed and destroyed as a result of changes to MRLs.

For further details, see Simplification of rules on pesticide MRLs and approvals.

Why? Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and farmers within the EU are calling for a stricter approach to imported products containing pesticides that are not approved in the EU, due to concerns about consumer health and the potential competitive disadvantage for EU farmers.

Biocidal products (Regulation 528/2012)

The European Commission proposes that active substances used in biocides (including those already approved) should be approved for an unlimited duration, unless there is a specific need to limit the duration to protect human and animal health or the environment.

Why? There are consistent delays in approvals of substances for use in biocidal products and in the authorisation of products, hindering market access and discouraging innovation. Reducing the need for renewal of substances will allow the authorities to focus resources on evaluating and authorising new substances.

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Feed additives (Regulation 1831/2003)

The Commission proposes to simplify rules on modifying authorisations (e.g. changes to authorisation holders) and renewing authorisations; and to allow greater flexibility in labelling requirements, including digital labelling for certain non-safety information.

Why? To reduce compliance costs and administrative burdens.

For further details, see Simplification of rules on feed additive authorisations.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) (Regulation (EC) 999/2001)

The Commission requests new powers to update legislation regarding BSE more easily in response to evolving scientific knowledge, international standards, and the epidemiological situation.

Why? Current rules make it difficult for the EU to respond quickly to scientific developments and evolving international standards. For example, the rules on specified risk materials are too burdensome now the risk from BSE has reduced.

Official Controls Regulation (Regulation 2017/625)

The Commission proposes to allow more flexibility in clearance of consignments at border control posts, in particular where phytosanitary certificates cover diverse batches requiring different types of checks.

Why? Border control posts currently cannot release the compliant part of a consignment if another part of it still needs further checks. This can lead to unnecessary delays, particularly affecting perishable products.

For further details, see Simplification of rules on release of plant products by border control posts.

Animal welfare (Regulation (EC) 1099/2009)

The Commission proposes to reduce the administrative burden on EU Member State competent authorities, which will no longer be required to submit annual reports on depopulation (urgent mass killing) operations under Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

Why? This information is already submitted according to the Official Controls Regulation (2017/625).

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Fermentation products (Regulation (EC) 1829/2003)

The Commission proposes to clarify that genetically modified micro-organisms (GMMs) used in the fermentation process for producing food or feed are not considered to be genetically modified organisms (GMOs). This means they will not require authorisation under GMO Regulation 1829/2003, provided any residues from GMM fermentation contained in the final product meet certain conditions.

Why? Confusion on how to classify GMM creates uncertainty for operators and results in divergent enforcement by different Member States.

For further details, see Simplification of rules on fermentation using GMMs.

Why?

To improve the competitiveness and resilience of EU food and feed systems, the EU is looking to simplify legislation by removing unnecessary regulatory obstacles. It does not intend to change rules in a way that will reduce the current level of consumer protection provided by these rules.

Timeline

This proposal has entered a process of discussion and adoption by the Council of the EU (Member States) and the European Parliament, a process that can take up to 2 years.

Recommended Actions

The WTO consultation (G/SPS/N/EU/911) closed on 30 March 2026; the EU's Have your say consultation closed on 12 June 2026.

Stakeholders wishing to respond to the EU must be registered. Those who do not already have an account will first need to Create an EU login account, then register their organisation on the EU Transparency register.

Background

The EU Vision for Agriculture and Food 2025–2029, published in February 2025, set out a number of priorities, which included ensuring the competitiveness and resilience of the EU agri-food sector.

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The European Commission's proposals reflect the views of Member States and stakeholders across a number of areas of food law regarding simplification of food and feed safety rules. They also reflect recent evaluations of EU legislation, including a review of pesticides and feed additives legislation (European Commission 2020, 2024).

Resources

European Commission (2020) Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the document […] Evaluation of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 on the placing of plant protection products on the market and of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides

European Commission (2024) Executive Summary of the Evaluation of the Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 on additives for use in animal nutrition

European Commission (2025a) A Vision for Agriculture and Food: Shaping Together an Attractive Farming and Agri-Food Sector for Future Generations

European Commission (2025b) Simplification Omnibus Package: Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the proposal for a regulation amending Regulations 999/2001, 1829/2003, 1831/2003, 852/2004, 853/2004, 396/2005, 1099/2009, 1107/2009, 528/2012, 2017/625

Sources

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