

**STUDY REGARDING THE OFFICIAL CONTROLS CARRIED OUT DURING THE PERIOD JANUARY 2020 – DECEMBER 2022 IN THE FOOD FIELD**

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***Abstract:** Following official controls, which were carried out by specialists in the field, most units were checked in 2020, namely 400 economic operators, being analyzed units in the field of natural mineral waters and spring waters but also in the case of units of soft drinks. The planning and implementation of controls for the years 2021 and 2022 were carried out in the fields of: food and food safety, integration and sanitation at all stages of the production, processing and distribution process of food products and including rules aimed at ensuring practices in the field of trade but also regarding the manufacture and use of materials that will come into contact with food.*

**Key words:** food, controls, consumer protection, Romania

**INTRODUCTION**

Health protection is part of the objectives of protecting the living environment [13]. The objectives of such protection are aimed at the existence and observance of health and safety norms, for the benefit of businesses and workers, especially by promoting the health of the entire population and especially of vulnerable groups exposed to risk [1,6,7].

Consumer protection first considers the identification of the possibilities of using technological innovation so that it does not embarrass the consumer in any way, along with encouraging any kind of attempt to correlate innovation with consumer prevention [2,4,9]. Care for the individual, in his capacity as a consumer, takes into account the multiple situations in which he can be: consumer of goods (food and non-food), medicines, services, information, free time, etc [3,5,10].

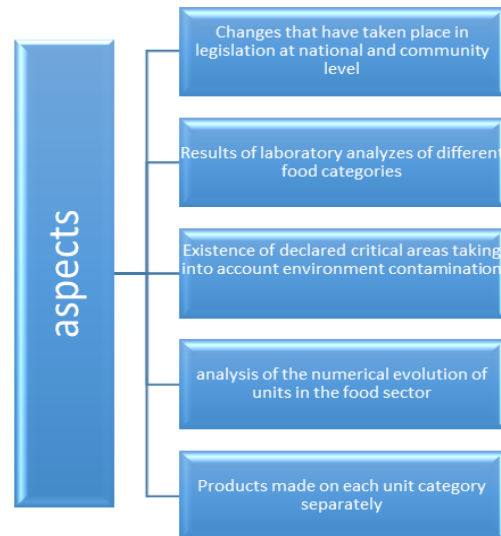
The main purpose of the National Veterinary Health and Food Safety Authority (NVHFSA) is to protect public health by ensuring the safety of food that can be of animal or non-animal origin, which can be achieved through the following [16] (figure 1):



**Figure 1. Methods of protecting public health**

NVHFSA came up with regulations, carrying out and monitoring how to apply, comply and take strategic actions in the field of food safety of animal origin.

These strategic measures were developed on the basis of a detailed analysis regarding the performance of some official controls that were carried out in the previous year, thus considering some aspects such as (figure 2):



**Figure 2. Aspects regarding strategic measures**

Following official controls that were carried out by specialists in the field, if non-conformities are identified, some necessary measures are applied that are established by current legislation in order to ensure that operators operating in the food field will have to act in order to remedy deficiencies and to achieve compliance [8,11,12,14].

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

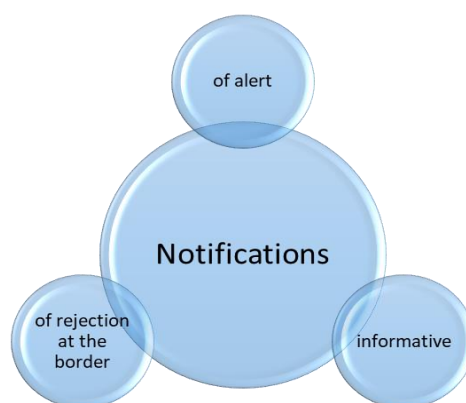
In order to analyze the number of alert, informative and rejection notifications sent at the border in 2020 or the comparative analysis of the number of samples analyzed in the period 2020-2022 or the number of economic operators according to the field of activity that were controlled in the period 2020-2022, the information published in the online environment by the National Veterinary Health and Food Safety Authority was analyzed and these data were subsequently interpreted in a comparative way.

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

Controls were carried out or planned to be carried out in the following areas:

- food and food safety,
- food processing and distribution,
- sanitation in all stages of processing,
- materials and/or objects manufacture, that are intended to come into contact with food at a given time,
- verifying the rules regarding ensuring the correct practices in trade,
- protecting the interests and information of consumers.

The European Food Safety Authority establishes certain specific procedures regarding food safety, having as its legal basis a Regulation (EC), namely No. 178/2002, it provides certain principles but also general requirements of the legislation in the food field, which has as the purpose of giving the control authorities a functional element to ensure an exchange of information regarding the measures in place to ensure food safety. If we talk about this system, we can mention three types of notifications (figure 3):



**Figure 3. Types of notifications**

To better highlight what is happening in this area, we thought it is appropriate to mention what each type of notification refers to separately:

- the alert ones are transmitted when a food that is put on the market presents a certain risk and this fact leads to the necessity of immediate actions, so that consumers are automatically assured that the product that has been complained about through such an alert notification, has withdrawn or will be withdraw from the market.

- informative ones are transmitted when a risk regarding a food on the market is identified, but it does not affect all members of a network, because that product has not reached their market, or the risk may not require immediate action.

- those of rejection at the border are sent regarding a risk identified for a specific product, risk affecting the life and/or health of the consumer. These refer to food shipments that have been tested, controlled and then rejected at the country's border points.

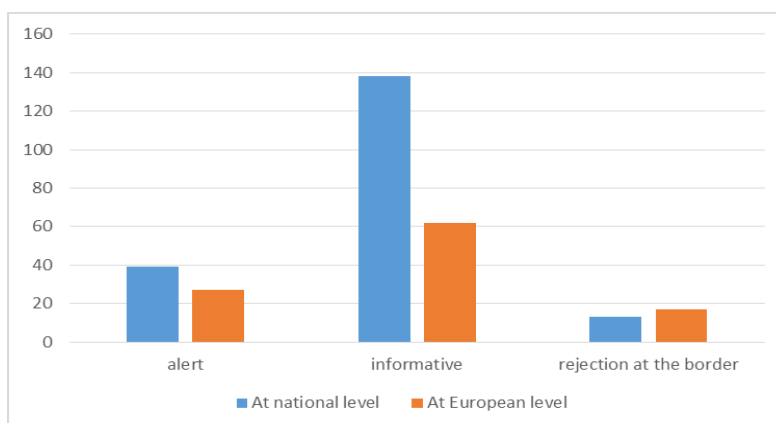
In 2020, such notifications were sent both at national and European level (table 1. and figure 4):

**Table 1**

**The number of notifications sent in 2020**

Notification type	At national level	At European level
alert	39	27
informative	138	62
rejection at the border	13	17

Source: [www.ansvsa.ro](http://www.ansvsa.ro)



**Figure 4. Number of notifications sent in 2020**

All the notifications that were sent in 2020 were resolved both nationally and Europeanly considering the legal and European procedures.

The planning and carrying out of controls for the years 2021 and 2022 were carried out for the fields of: food and food safety, integration and sanitation at all stages of the production, processing and distribution process of food products and including rules aimed at ensuring practices in the field of trade but and regarding the manufacture and use of materials that will come into contact with food.

Each type of unit can be placed in a certain risk group depending on the score obtained following evaluations that were carried out by the veterinary services in each county of the country.

When the unit is in a certain risk group, it is or will be subject to veterinary controls, controls that will have different frequencies depending on the risk.

In the case of retail units, a procedure was developed for classifying them in certain risk groups, which was sent for implementation at the level of each county, so that, for example, retail units such as butchers, grocers, milk processing centers and transformation into dairy products, poultry slaughtering centers, landing points for fish species, game collection centers.

As part of these strategic actions, controls have been and will be intensified at the level of small producers, who sell their products in markets and/or fairs that are periodically organized by local authorities.

Regarding food hygiene, the units that have been evaluated and classified according to risk, will be or have already been (in the case of those from 2021) subject to control taking into account some specific criteria such as the history of the unit, the types and forms of non-conformities that have been reported, the frequency of occurrence of non-conformities, the changes that appear in technical and technological terms, etc.

The control frequencies are established on three risk categories for the units that have been grouped according to the type of activity carried out as follows (figure 5):

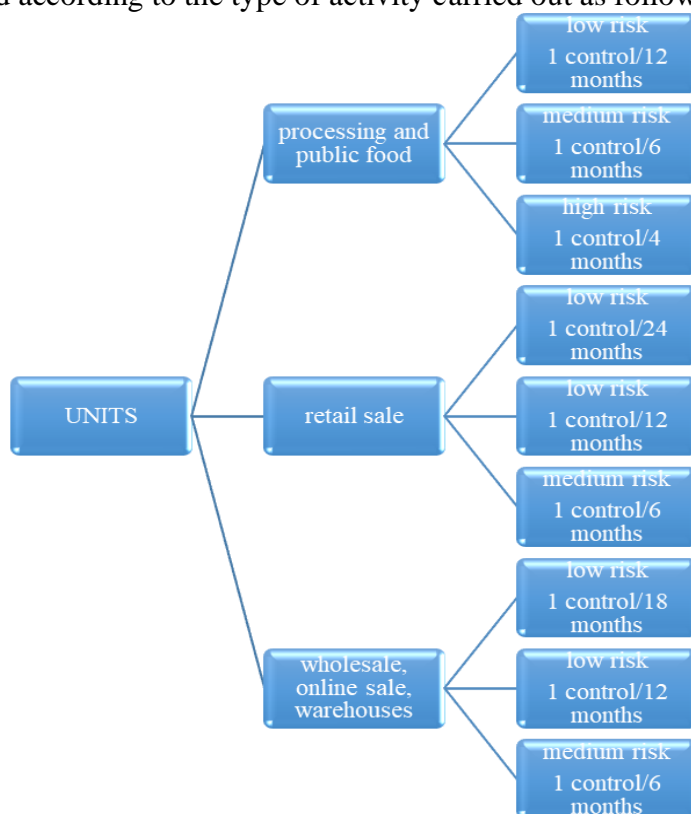


Figure 5. Frequency of controls by risk categories and unit types

Starting from 2021, hygiene controls in the primary production of foods of non-animal origin have been extended so that they are included in all production stages, even in the pre-harvest and harvest stage, prioritizing the field of vegetables, fruits and cereals depending on the risks presented.

Depending on the reason that determined the checks to be carried out in the period 2020-2022, the following samples were collected or will be collected (until the end of 2022) (table 2):

Table 2.

**The number of samples analyzed and proposed to be analyzed  
in the period 2020-2022**

Type of evidence	No. samples/ year 2020	No. samples/ year 2021	No. samples/ year 2022
Quantitative determination of sulfites presents in different food categories	60	60	30
Monitoring of foods that are treated with radiation	84	84	84
Determination of the presence of lead, cadmium, aluminum, mercury, arsenic and tin in food	84	84	84
Microbiological analyses	42	42	42
Determination of the number of nitrates	42	42	42
Determination of the presence of pesticides	42	42	42
Determination of the presence of melamine	42	42	42

Source: [www.ansvsa.ro](http://www.ansvsa.ro)

Regarding the activity fields of the economic units that were controlled in the period 2020-2022, it is noted that most units were controlled in 2020, namely 400 economic operators, being analyzed units in the field of natural mineral waters and of spring waters but also in the case of soft drink obtaining units (table 3).

Table 3.

**The number of economic operators according to the field of activity controlled  
in the period 2020-2022**

Field of activity	Number of economic units		
	2020	2021	2022
Processing of milk and milk products	200	60	60
Processing of meat products	0	90	90
Processing of fish and fish products	0	60	60
Vegetable and fruit processing	300	90	90
Mineral waters and spring waters	400	120	120
Obtaining refreshments	400	120	120
Processing of bread and bakery products	300	90	90
Sugar, honey, syrups	0	20	20
Prepackaged meat	0	30	30

Source: [www.ansvsa.ro](http://www.ansvsa.ro)

## CONCLUSIONS

Food and nutrition represent something essential for the life of every human being, through which every human being can provide energy and the basic substances that are necessary for the development of metabolic processes, representing a regulatory exchange process that takes place between the body and the environment. Considering all this, the importance of the main purpose of the National Veterinary Health and Food

Safety Authority (NVHFS) is explained, which is to protect public health by ensuring the safety of food that can be of animal or non-animal origin.

In recent years, hygiene controls have been expanded in the primary production of foods that are of non-animal origin so that they are included in all production stages, even in the pre-harvest and harvest stage, prioritizing the field of vegetables, fruits and of cereals depending on the risks presented. In 2022, several economic units were controlled, of which 90 units are active in the field of product processing, of which 120 units are in the field of obtaining soft drinks.

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