Industry assurance schemes
third party certification,
and
official controls

A view from the FVO

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Who are we?

- Directorate F, the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), of the Health & Consumers Directorate General (DG SANCO)
What do we do?

- We verify compliance with (or equivalence to) EU legislation/standards in the areas of:
  - food and feed safety, animal and plant health, animal welfare
  - organic farming, protected denominations
  - medical devices, active pharmaceutical substances

- We do not do policy
Where are we in the process?

3 layers of responsibility:

- **FVO**
  - verify how the competent authorities ensure enforcement of EU standards, and their functioning in practice

- **National Authorities**
  - carry out official controls to enforce EU standards

- **Operators**
  - apply EU standards (primary responsibility)
We aim at effective systems for official controls
Assurance schemes and official controls: a marriage of convenience?
Context: things that have happened

- Dioxins crises → critical role of
  - non-traditional part of the feed sector
  - feed sourcing/labelling

- Financial crises
  - efficiency gains in official controls
  - added value for operators
Main issue for competent authorities: efficiently organising risk-based controls

Can assurance schemes and their third party certification be of help?
Benefits of collaboration

- Avoid duplication of efforts
- Seek synergies
- Understand others' perspective and avoid misunderstandings
Advantages for the authorities (I)

- Better use of dwindling resources
- Recognition of operators' best practice
- Availing of expertise in specific areas
- Knowledge about the entire feed chain (i.e. beyond classical operators)
- Access to a wider "risk" database
Advantages for the authorities (II)

- Better understanding of risks:
  - knowing the reality of operators and the chain
  - being aware of the external environment (e.g. costs associated with products)

- Awareness about emerging risks

→ Full use of Article 3 of Reg. 882/2004
Advantages for schemes

- Partnership and recognition
- Policing of use of logos
- Reduce administrative burden for operators (added value from adherence to the scheme)
- Reality check about the work of third party certification audits
Challenges (I)

- Dialogue difficulties: commercial vs safety?
- Level of representation of schemes in different countries
- Scope of certification /adherence to scheme
- Performance (and independence) of third party certification bodies
- Transparency issues

→ TRUST
Challenges (II)

- Leading to the idea that assurance schemes are a replacement of official controls

- Abstaining to carry out certain official controls
# General elements of trust for the competent authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assurance scheme governance</th>
<th>Certification bodies</th>
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<td>• Setting body</td>
<td>• Accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Standards: legislation and guidance</td>
<td>• Monitoring the performance of auditors: trainings, desk and on-the-spot</td>
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Trust: sharing of data (I)

- Membership of the scheme and scope of certification
- Collated data on own-checks → facilitates the targeting of official monitoring
- Content and schedule of certification audits
Suspension from the scheme
Repeat non-conformities affecting the management of risks
Immediate threats to public/animal health
→ trigger points
Alerts

— There are confidentiality issues … but mechanisms have to be established !!!
Thanks for your attention!

Any question?