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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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NEW OFFICIAL CONTROLS REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

COMMUNICATION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following communication, received on 28 February 2020, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of the European Union.

Last year the European Union shared information with WTO Members, on 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 ("OCR"), adopted on 15 March 2017 (G/SPS/GEN/1692).

1 REGULATORY ACTS

1. In the said communication, reference was made to a number of delegated and implementing acts planned to be adopted under the OCR. Those acts, 33 in total, have now been adopted and published in the Official Journal of the European Union.
2. A detailed list of the acts, including links to the legal texts published in the portal "EURLEX", may be found at the European Commission's website:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/oc_qa_oregulation_20191212_delegated_implemented_acts_en.pdf.
3. The vast majority of the acts adopted relate to the new system for border controls on animals, plants, food and feed entering the European Union. The OCR and its implementing measures establish a more integrated approach, as common rules now apply to controls carried out at borders on animals, products of animal origin, plants and other products and goods that must be checked before they enter the European Union. New rules have also been developed for wood packaging material entering the Union with any kind of consignment.
4. The new import control system is more risk-based, targeted and harmonised than before, including all major aspects of the food chain. Common requirements for facilities, equipment and staff qualifications will apply throughout all border control posts. All consignments to be presented at the border control posts must undergo documentary checks, while identity and physical checks will be carried out at a frequency depending on the risk linked to the specific animals or goods. The common criteria to determine and modify the frequency of identity and physical checks have been established in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2129.
5. In addition, a single standard document, the Common Health Entry Document (CHED), will be used by operators for the prior notification of consignments. It will be transmitted to the border control post through a new integrated computerised system for official controls (Integrated Management System for Official Controls, IMSOC) which will optimise the digital handling and exchange of information, data and documents necessary for the enforcement of agri-food chain rules.

2 TRANSITIONAL PERIODS

6. Similar to the OCR, most new provisions laid down in these acts are applicable since 14 December 2019. However, for certain matters transitional periods have been established as follows.

- For composite products, current rules on import checks in Directive 97/78/EC will remain applicable until 20 April 2021.
- For plant health checks at control points other than border control post, current rules in Directive 2000/29/EC will apply until 13 December 2020.
- For the frequency of plant health checks at border control posts, current rules in Directive 2000/29/EC will apply until 13 December 2022.

3 TRANSPARENCY

7. The OCR regulation and all its delegated and implementing acts have been notified to WTO Members under the WTO SPS Agreement.

8. As an additional means to raise awareness about the new rules on official controls, a conference called "Smarter rules for safer food and plant health" was organised in Brussels on 13 December 2019. The conference, which also addressed the new EU legislation on plant health, attracted more than 400 participants, including from trading partners, from all over the world. The recording of, and material from, the conference is to be found at: <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/smarter-rules-for-safer-food-and-plant-health-gasp> (password: ZsK587MyT).

9. Further information is available on the website of the European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/official_controls_en.
