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Brussels, July 2011.

Protocol “Born and raised in Belgium” for a food business operator in the production chain of pig meat

SECTION 1 – REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

International level

1. **Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual** defines **traceability/product tracing** as *“the ability to follow the movement of a food through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution”*.
2. **Codex Alimentarius Commission/Guidelines 60-2006: Principles for Traceability/product tracing as a tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System** elaborates a set of principles to assist competent authorities in utilising traceability/product tracing as a tool within their food inspection and certification system.

EU level

1. **Regulation (EC) N°178/2002¹**, also known as the « **General Food Law** », defines:
 - under point 15 of Article 3 the definition of **traceability** as *“the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution”*;
 - under Article 18 the principles of **traceability** for food business operators are elaborated: *“one step back”* and *“one step forward”*.
2. **Regulation (EC) No 853/2004²** defines under Section III “Food Chain Information” of Annex II that *“food business operators operating a slaughterhouses must, as appropriate, request, receive, check, and act upon food chain information as set out in this Section in respect of all animals, other than wild game, sent or intended to be sent to the slaughterhouse”*.
The Food Chain Information for pigs is in force since January 01, 2008.

Belgian level

1. **Royal Decree of November 14, 2003³** defines under Chapter III “Traceability” additional requirement at national level and especially under point 3 of Article 6 makes it mandatory for food business operators to have systems and procedures in place for **internal traceability** in order to establish the link between products supplied to and delivered from their businesses.

¹ **Regulation (EC) N°178/2002** of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirement of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety

² **Regulation (EC) No 853/2004** of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin

³ **Belgian Royal Decree of 14 November 2003** on self-checking, obligatory notification and traceability in the food chain.

SECTION 2 - SCOPE

This document elaborates a set of principles to underpin implementing measures to be carried out by a food business operator for compliance with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" through batch management at all stages of the production chain for pig meat.

SECTION 3 - DEFINITIONS

ARSA/DGZ : Regional association of Animal Health (Association Régionale de Santé et d'Identification Animales / Dierengezondheidszorg Vlaanderen)

BELTRACE : Computerised database at slaughterhouse level, compulsory since 1 December 2004, for the registration and the traceability of animals in Belgium. The aim of this computerised database is to establish a link to the information on animals and farms that is already available in the SANITEL/SANITRACE database.

FASFC : Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain

FCI : "Food Chain Information" from the farm to the slaughterhouse. The slaughterhouse must not accept animals onto the slaughterhouse premises unless it has been provided with the food chain information that covers :

- the status of the holding with regard to animal health,
- the animals' health status,
- veterinary medicinal products or other treatments administered to the animals, together with their dates of administration and withdrawal periods,
- the occurrence of diseases that may affect the safety of meat,
- the results, if they are relevant, of any analysis carried out, relevant reports about previous ante- and post-mortem-inspections of animals from the same holding,
- production data, when this might indicate the presence of disease,
- the name and address of the veterinarian normally attending the holding of provenance.

OV : official veterinarian of the FASFC

SANITEL/SANITRACE : Computerised database for animal identification and registration at farm level. The aim of this system is to ensure the automatic management of the permanent inventory of each herd. For pigs, it takes into account the number of weaned piglets and the animals that join or leave the herd.

SECTION 4 – PRINCIPLES

From farm to cold store, the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" is implemented and checked at all stages of the food chain. Meat coming from animals that are intended for export and that meet the requirement « Born and raised in Belgium » is processed and channelled separately in time and/or in space from all other meat.

This system of "channelling" and the internal traceability is checked at all stages of production, processing and distribution (diagram in Annex I).

4.1 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF ANIMALS AT THE FARM

The traceability starts at the farms by means of marking, registration and inspection of the pigs. Two types of marks are used to identify pigs : ear tags and tattoos. These marks must allow the tracing back of the herd of origin of the animals. **The herd ear tag** contains the abridged code number that is unique to each individual herd. Only approved ear tags may be used. The tags are applied in all farms where pigs are born, no later than when the piglets are weaned.

All slaughter pigs must be marked on both sides before leaving the herd. Tattoos must be applied by means of an approved **tattooing hammer** and consist of the code number of the herd.

The pig farmer keeps **records** of all pigs that are brought into his farm or taken out of it. He thereto writes down the reference number of the loading and unloading form. All data of new herds or changes occurring in a herd shall be entered into the **SANITEL/SANITRACE** system. In this inventory must be entered all arrivals and departures of pigs.

The farmer must confirm the status "Born and raised in Belgium" of the pigs by indicating that the pigs satisfy with the requirement of the importing country onto the heading "Export to third country" of the **FCI document**.

4.2 FROM FARM TO SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The veterinarian of the holding must visit the holding three times a year to check the identification, the use of ear tags, the inventory, the implementation of the rules on disease prevention and the health situation of the pigs.

All transports must be mentioned on an official transport form and entered into the SANITEL/SANITRACE database either by the transporter himself (on the internet) or by the regional associations for animal health (ARSIA/DGZ).

4.3 REGISTERS AND TRACEABILITY AT THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The animals that are transported and admitted to the slaughterhouse shall be accompanied by an **official transport form and a document** called "**Food Chain Information**" (FCI) supplied by the farmer.

At the slaughterhouse the data on slaughtering shall be entered into the **BELTRACE database** and linked to the information that is already available in the SANITEL/SANITRACE database on animals and farms. The pigs are identified by batch and by means of tattoo numbers. The tattoo number is entered into BELTRACE and has a unique link to the farm. Both fields are linked to one another. When one of the numbers is entered into the system the other one is automatically generated.

The slaughter notice and the slaughter registration must be drawn up in such a way that the official veterinarian (OV) can record the information of the ante mortem inspection. **If the data have not been recorded, the OV cannot authorize the slaughtering.**

All batches of animals shall be inspected on arrival. Internal procedures shall make it possible to check beforehand whether the animals have been correctly identified; are accompanied by relevant information on the farm of origin (especially the information of origin), whether they are clean, in good health and whether they meet the animal welfare requirement.

Non-compliances shall be recorded, the measures required taken (with respect to stock farmers, transporters, animals...) and the OV informed.

Slaughterhouse operators must have « **Food Chain Information** » (FCI) on all animals brought to the slaughterhouse. This FCI must be supplied by the farmer **no less than 24 hours before the arrival of the pigs at the slaughterhouse**. Slaughterhouse operators have to check that the notification of the compliance "Born and raised in Belgium" is mentioned onto the heading "Export to third country" of the FCI document and that a segregation of batches of animals born and raised in Belgium from other pigs are established.

The slaughtering of animals, identified as "Born and raised in Belgium", shall be organised per group of animals. Animals that don't satisfy with the "Born and raised" requirement have to be slaughtered after animals that are in accordance with these requirement.

After approval on post mortem inspection, carcasses are marked with at least one health mark per half carcass and with an sequential number. With this sequential number and an automatic tracing system during cooling the segregation is maintained throughout the chain and can be checked daily.

The operator shall have systems in place that guarantee the traceability of these products at all stages of the production chain. With the **internal traceability**, it should be possible to establish the link between incoming batch of animals and outgoing meat and to guarantee the compliance of meat with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium".

4.4 FROM THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE TO THE CUTTING PLANT

The compliance with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" shall be mentioned on the commercial documents sent from the slaughterhouse to the cutting plant(s) together with the meat. Cutting plant operators have to check if the pig meat comes from a slaughterhouse present on the list of authorized exporting companies.

The meat in compliance with the requirement may be processed, if applicable, separated in time and/or in space from other meat.

4.5 TRACEABILITY AT THE CUTTING PLANT

The operator shall have recording systems (IN/OUT) in which he can enter incoming and outgoing products as well as:

- their nature,
- the identification,
- the amount,
- the date of receipt (IN) or of supply (OUT)
- and the identification of the food businesses involved.

The internal traceability shall also make it possible to establish the link between incoming and outgoing products.

When the meat has been cut, it is stored and then packaged and labelled. By all means, meat coming from animals intended for export and meeting the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" shall be processed at the cutting plant separated in time and/or in space, before other meat.

In an integrated slaughterhouse/cutting plant, packaged meat must be marked with the approval number (identification mark) of the cutting plant in addition to the batch identification. Via the approval number, the meat can be traced back to the last plant that processed the meat.

If the meat is processed at a stand-alone cutting plant, it can be traced back to the slaughterhouse via the commercial documents as described in section 4.4. Based on the batch identification/commercial documents, the slaughterhouse can trace back to the origin of the pigs (slaughter date, production time) and trace the meat to a batch of carcasses. The slaughter sequence number of the carcass is connected to the supplier's number, and on this basis the meat can be traced back to the pig herd and the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" can be checked.

4.6 FROM THE CUTTING PLANT TO THE COLD STORE

The compliance with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" shall be mentioned on the commercial documents sent from the cutting plant to the cold store together with the meat.

4.7 TRACEABILITY AT THE COLD STORE

Appropriate procedures for the control of pig meat on arrival and during storage shall be available at the cold store in order to guarantee compliance with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium".

Moreover, clear delineation at cold store is required for "Born and raised" products, such as having dedicated area or specific visual delineation on shelves/rows (specials labels, colour identification,...).

The operator shall have recording systems (IN/OUT) in which he can enter incoming and outgoing products as well as:

- the nature,
- the identification,
- the amount,
- the date of receipt (IN) or of supply (OUT)
- and the identification of the food businesses involved.

Meat/carcasses can be traced back to the slaughterhouse or cutting plant via the approval number (health mark/identification mark)

4.8 CERTIFICATION

Prior to export certification, the compliance with the requirement "Born and raised in Belgium" shall be ensured by the food business operator and verified by the OV.

