



## Belgian network to tackle fraud within the food chain

Dr Charlie Leroy – National Investigation Unit

# Belgian network to tackle fraud within the food chain

1. Public authorities involved (Belgian network against fraud)
2. Structure/coordination
3. Control program
4. Some results/examples of food fraud fighting obtained at Belgian level (case studies)



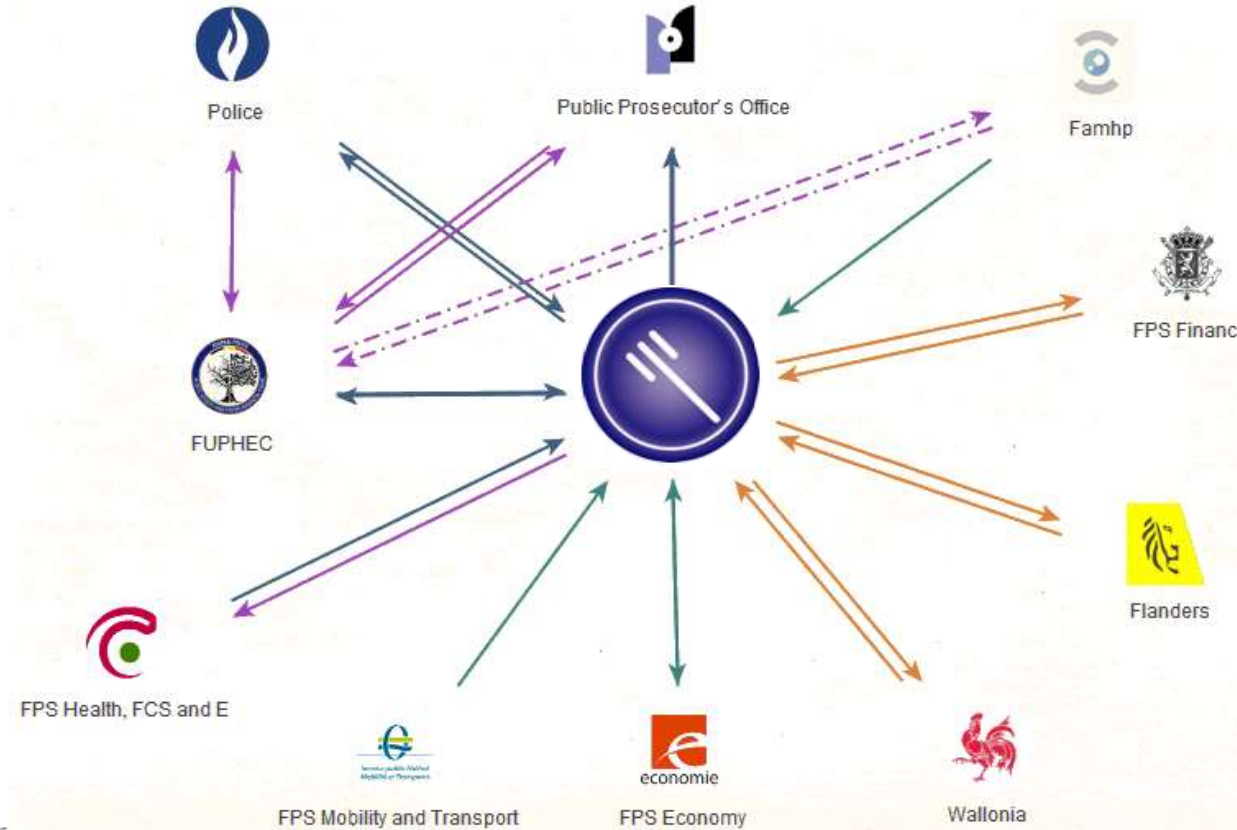


# 1 Public authorities involved (Belgian network against fraud)



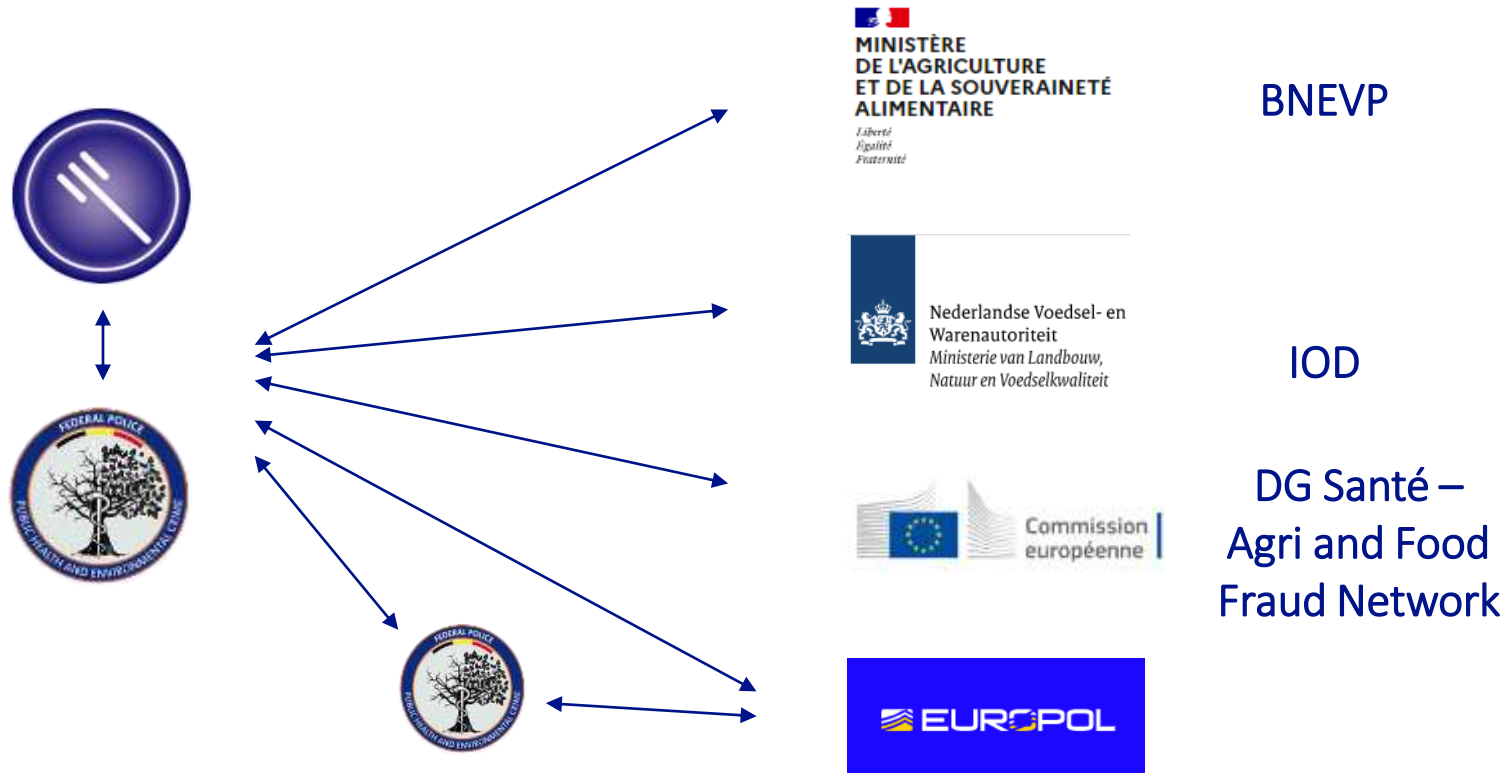
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## 1. Public authorities involved (Belgian network against fraud)



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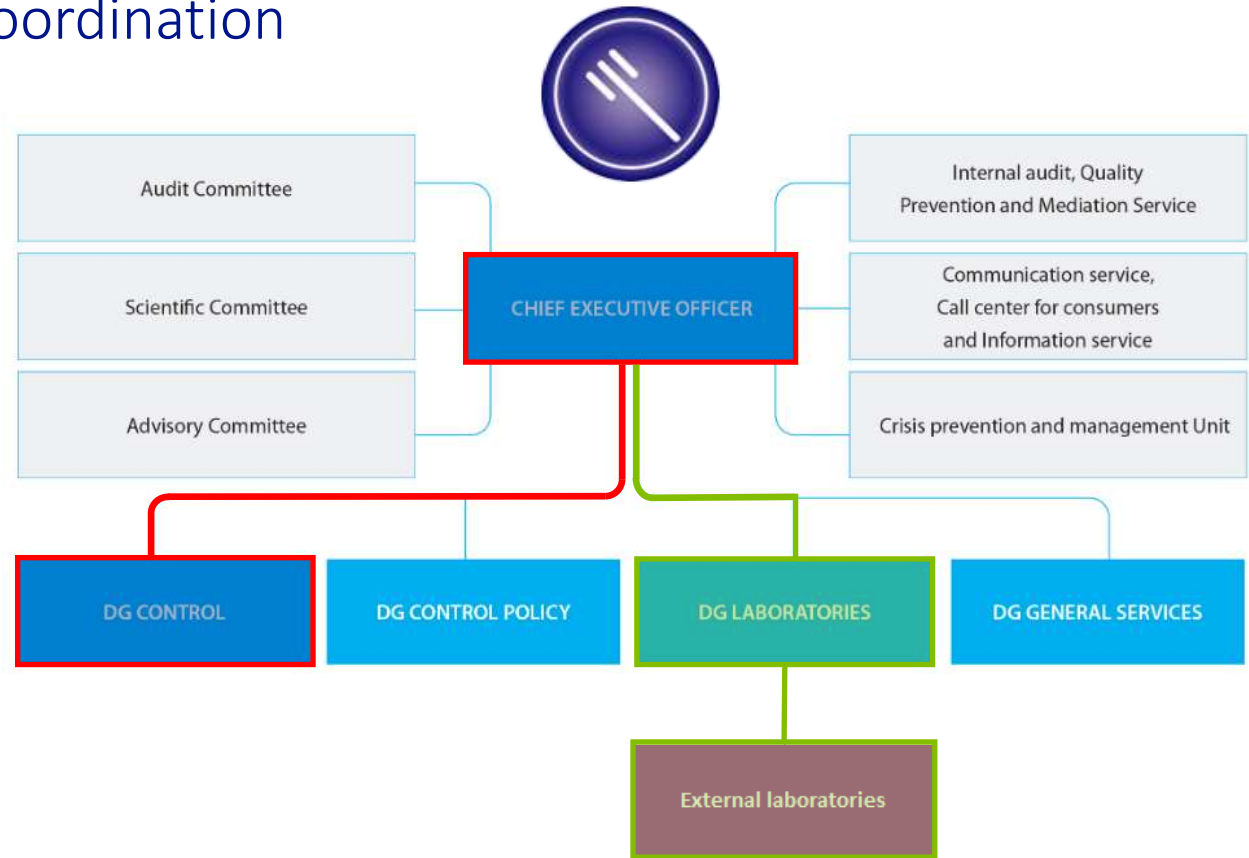
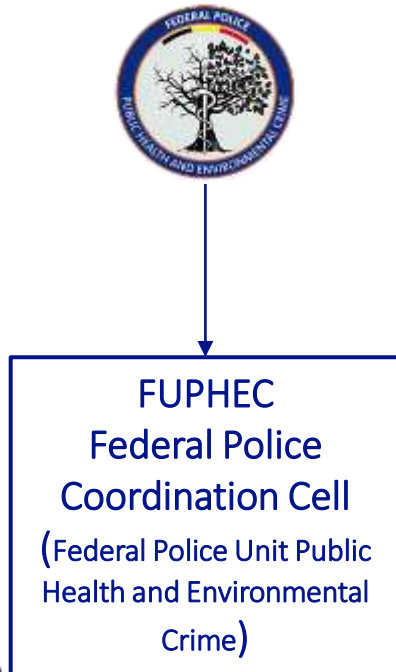


## 2 Structure/coordination



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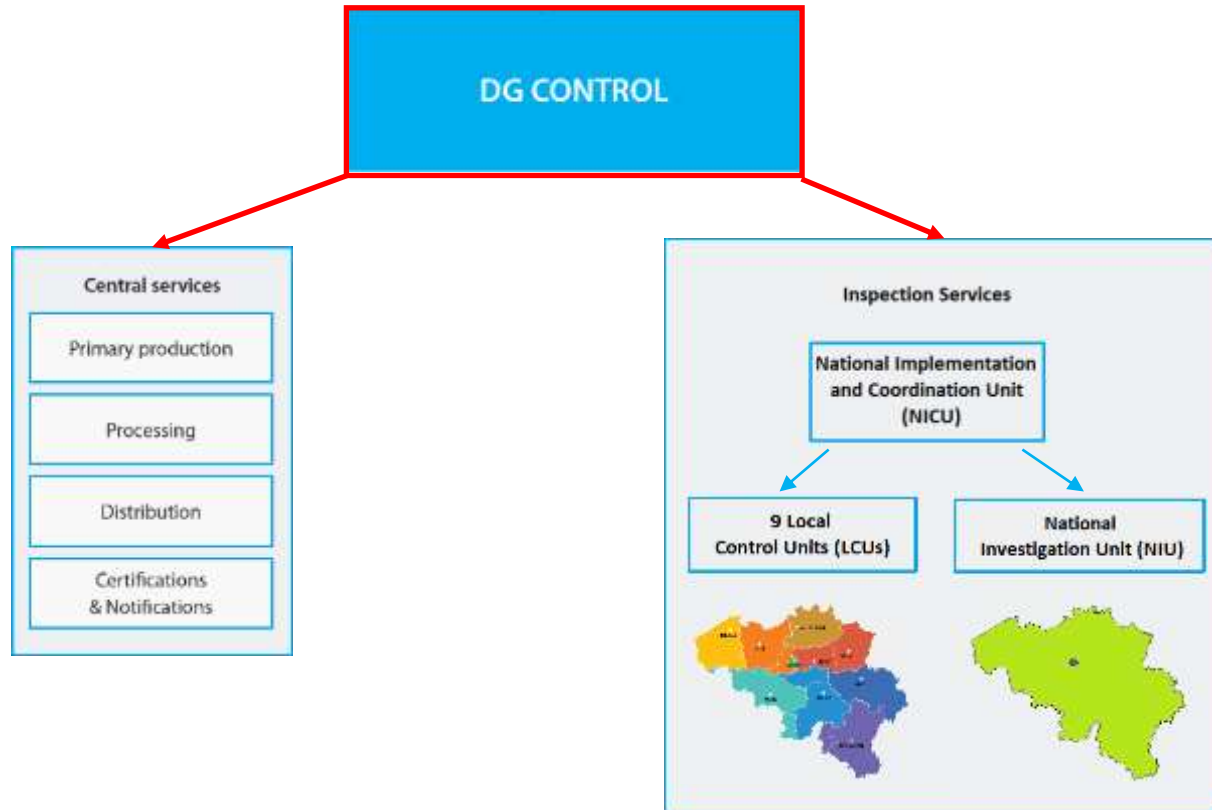
## 2. Structure/coordination



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## 2. Structure/coordination

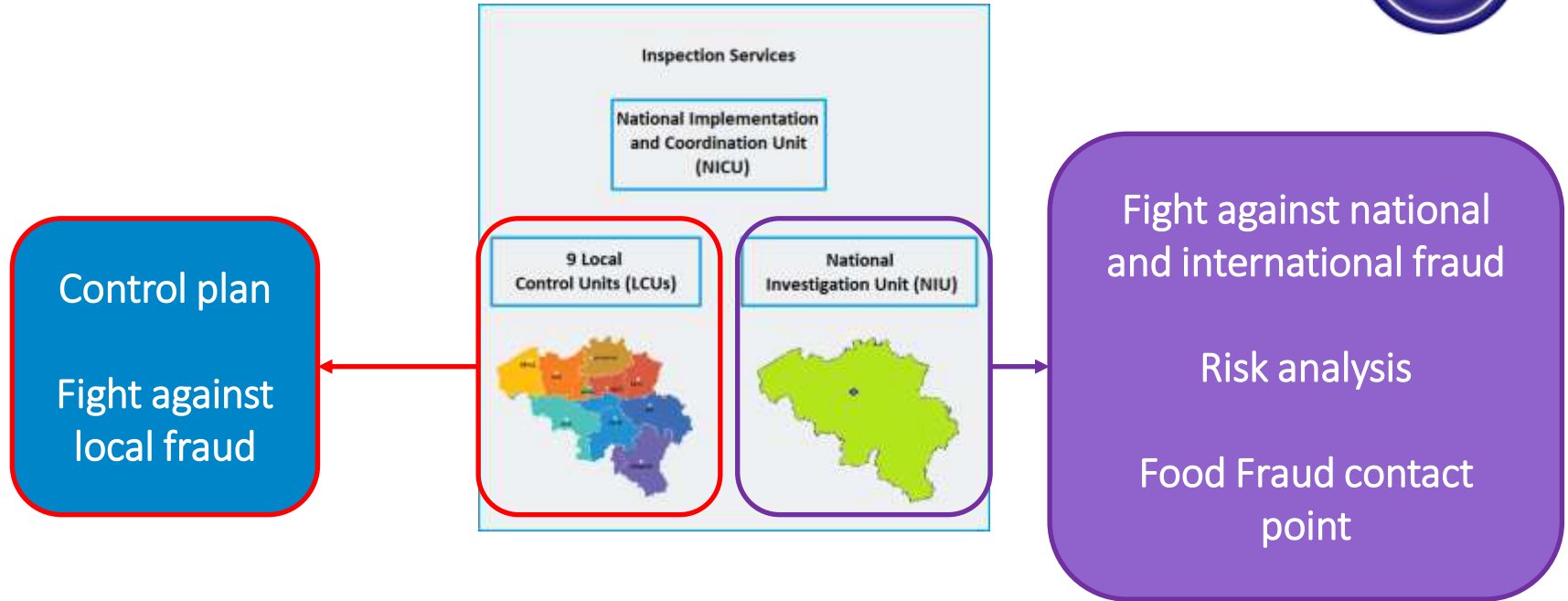




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## 2. Structure/coordination



# Belgian network to tackle fraud within the food chain



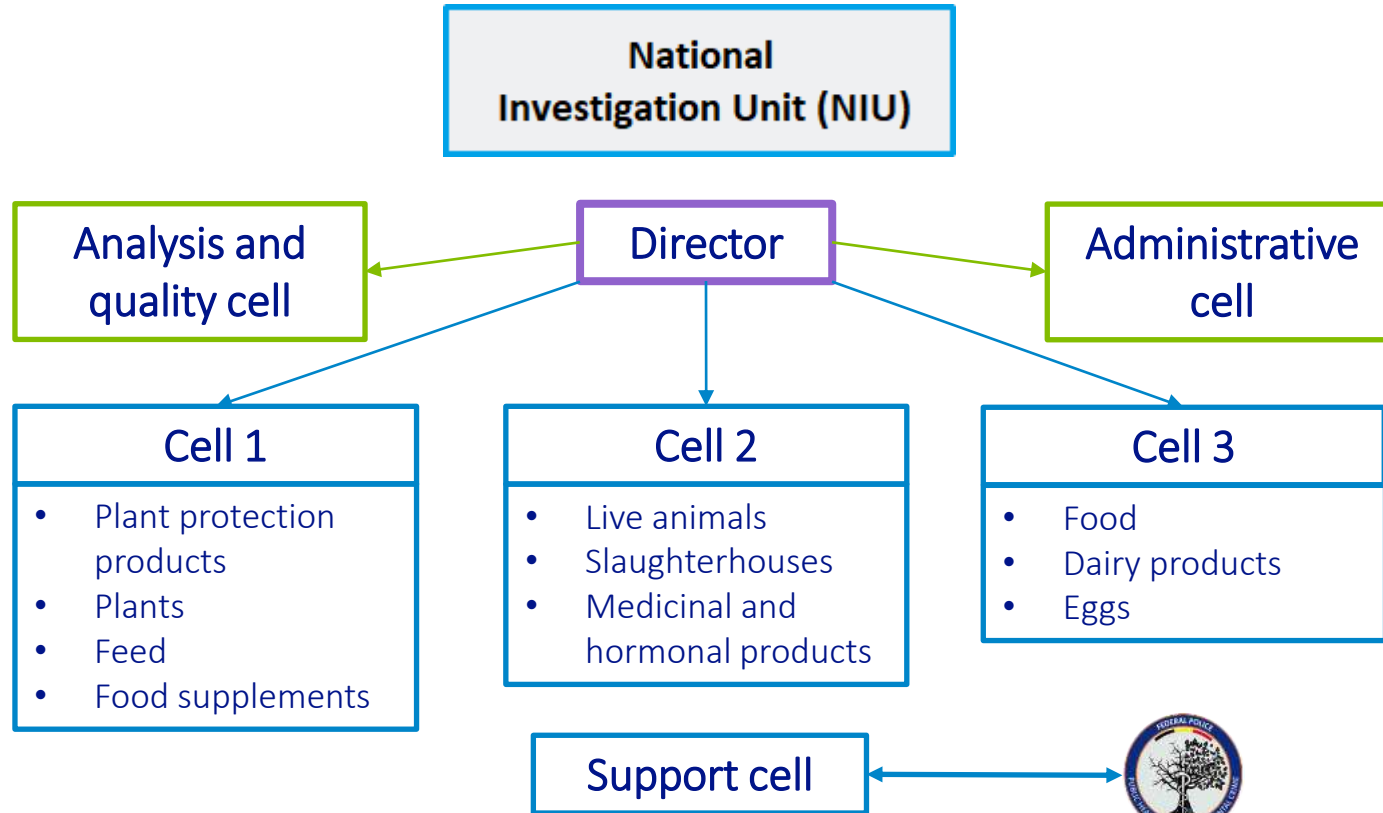
## 2. Structure/coordination



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## 2. Structure/coordination





# 3 Control program



# Belgian network to tackle fraud within the food chain

## Specificity of frauds

- Various and varied forms.
- Deception or evasion of the law.
- In the field of the food chain, fraud always aims to save money or time (time is money).

**➔ Intentional violation of Food Law for PROFIT**



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## Specificity of frauds

- Deliberate intention to hide the fraud.
- Ingenuity of fraudsters: improvement of fraud techniques.
- Lack of traceability



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Control program...

What can be  
Controlled

➔ **Fraud risk?**



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Risk assessable by market analysis

Risk not objectively assessable.



Risk not quantifiable, depends on the manager.

Risk not quantifiable, depends on the manager.

Few parameters are quantifiable





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Analysis and  
quality cell

		Fraud/health impact				
		1	2	3	4	5
		1. Light	2. Limited	3. Serious	4. Very serious	5. Catastrophic
	<b>Fraud</b>	Insignificant	localized	Important	Important and networked	Heavy traffic (mafia)
	<b>Public health hazard</b>	None or almost none	Weak	Existing hazard	Very serious (visible symptoms)	Possible mortalities
	<b>Distribution of the product</b>	Not distributed	Limited or controlled	Average distribution	Very widespread	Very wide and uncontrolled (unreliable traceability)
	<b>Analysis</b>	Action Limit Exceeded	Exceeding standard or MRL	Exceeding the risk limit	Significant overshoot of the risk limit	Lethal grades
Frequency	1	Arrives a few times a year in a service	E. Often			
	2	Once or a few times a year in own organization	D. Regularly			
	3	Has already taken place once in own organization	C. Not often			
	4	Already mentioned to public authorities	B. Rarely			
	5	Never mentioned before to public authorities	A. Unlikely			





# 4

Some results/examples of food fraud fighting obtained at Belgian level (case studies)



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## Example :

June 6, 2017:

- Receipt of an external laboratory result: presence of fipronil in an egg (Prohibited substance).
- Investigation: the egg comes from the Netherlands.
- Sending information to the Dutch authorities and requesting information on the possible distribution of eggs in Belgium.



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## Example :

End of June 2017:

- Still no information from the Netherlands. (*Judicial investigation underway*)
- ➔ **We decide to organize an action to research the use of fipronil in poultry farms in Belgium.**
- We target clients of suspected veterinarians known to our service.



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## Example :

July 6, 2017:

- Control of several farms in Flanders and Wallonia by NIU.
- No trace of use of fipronil in farm documents, but samples taken.

Samples :

- ✓ Sampling Eggs.
- ✓ poultry carcasses.
- ✓ Swabs of surfaces and feed lines.
- ✓ Vet Drug Sprayer Swabs.



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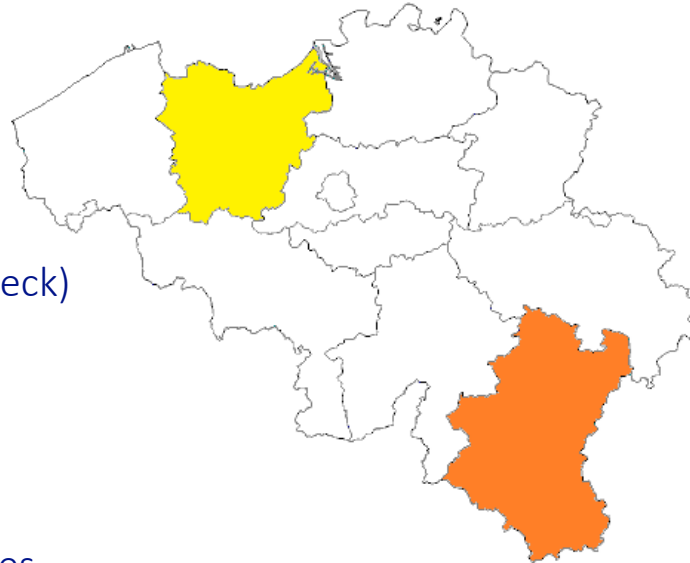


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## Example :

Friday, July 14, 2017 :

- Receipt of analysis results: 100% non-compliant in two poultry farms.
- **East Flanders**
  - Vet Drug Sprayer
  - Swabs (No animals present during the check)
- **Luxembourg**
  - Eggs.
  - Poultry carcasses.
  - Surfaces and feed lines.



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## Example :

Friday, July 14, 2017 :

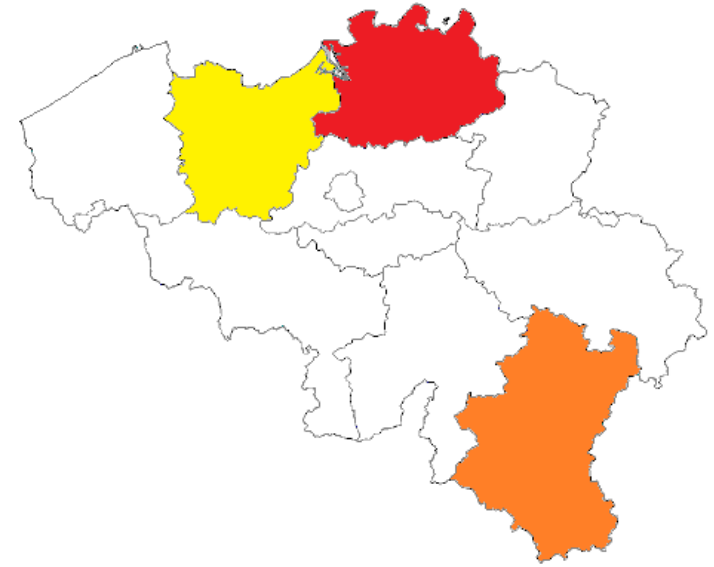
- Investigation in East Flanders (NIU): a suspect identified in the Province of Antwerp.

- Request for home search from the Judge of the Police Court.

But holidays...

➔ Expected date of receipt:

Wednesday, July 19, 2017



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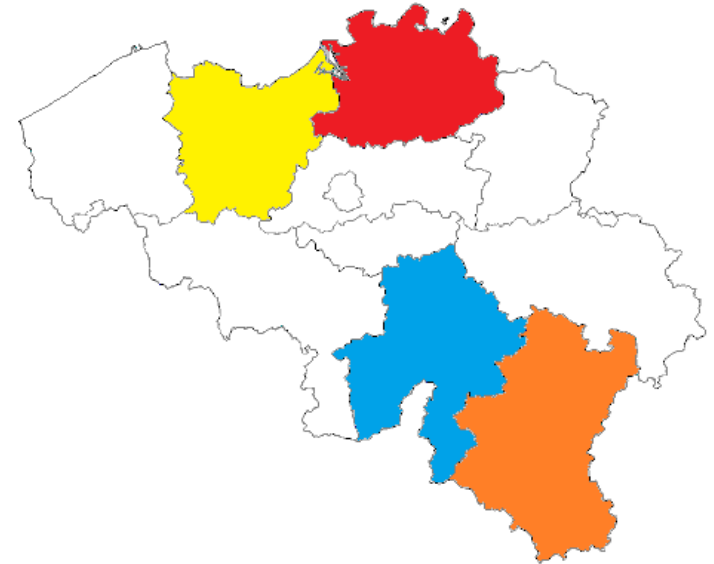
## Example :

Monday July 17, 2022, morning :

- Investigation in the Province of Luxembourg (NIU and Local Unit): spraying of a "BIO" product on poultry in May 2017 by a company from the province of Namur. Identity of suspect unknown.

In this farm, presence of other "BIO" products from the same company → samples.

Blocking and recall of eggs.





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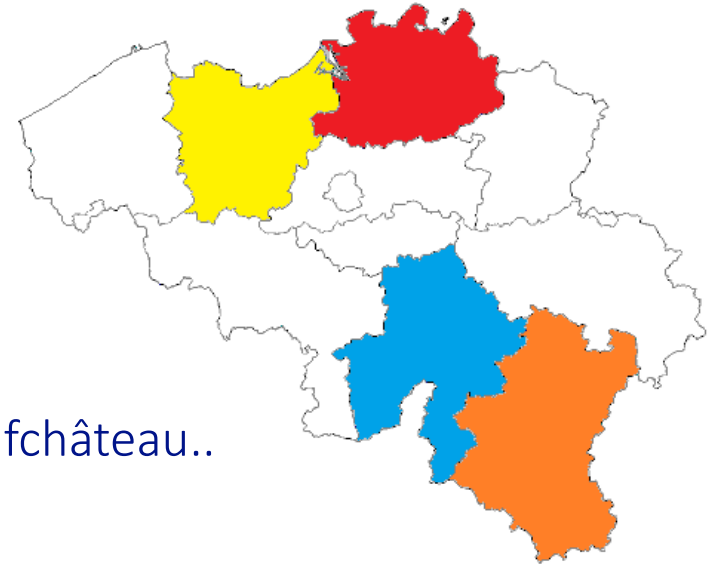
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## Example :

Monday July 17, 2022, morning :

- Urgent need to identify a suspect.  
➔ Phone contact with the Public Prosecutor Of Luxembourg.
- Request to write quickly an official report
- Request to contact the federal police of Neufchâteau..



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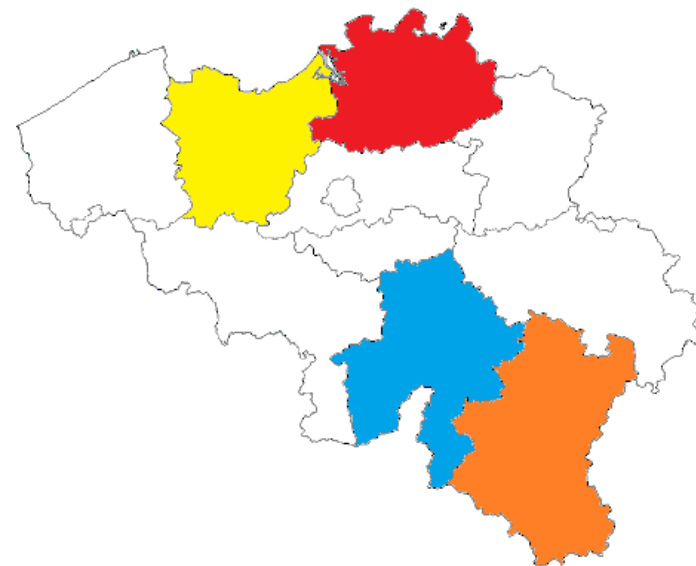
## Example :

Monday July 17, 2022, afternoon :

- Delivery of samples to the laboratory for urgent analysis.
- Meeting at the Public Prosecutor's office with the Federal Police, filing of the report, explanation of the problem and the needs...
- The Federal Police are investigating to identify the suspect.



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## Example :

Monday July 17, 2022, evening :

- The federal police identify the suspect from the Namur society, he is a resident of the province of Limbourg...

Tuesday, July 18, 2017:

- The Federal Police hear the suspect from Limburg: the "BIO" products were purchased from an Antwerp resident, **the same as the one who sold the products in the province of East Flanders** and **information that this product is widely used...**



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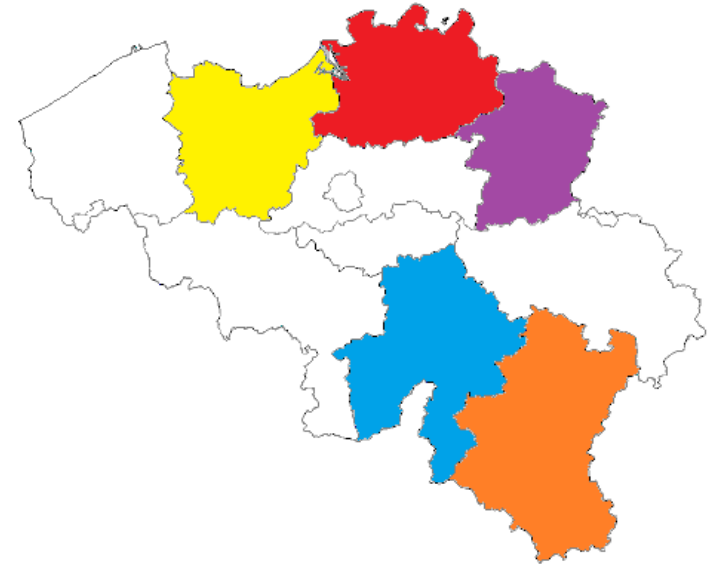
## Example :

Tuesday, July 18, 2017:

- The suspect still had the cans of the product sprayed in May 2017.
- The cans are deposited at the Police of Bastogne.
- The Local Unit of the FASFC in Libramont collects the cans and make samples for urgent analysis.



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## Example :

**Wednesday, July 19, 2017, morning:**

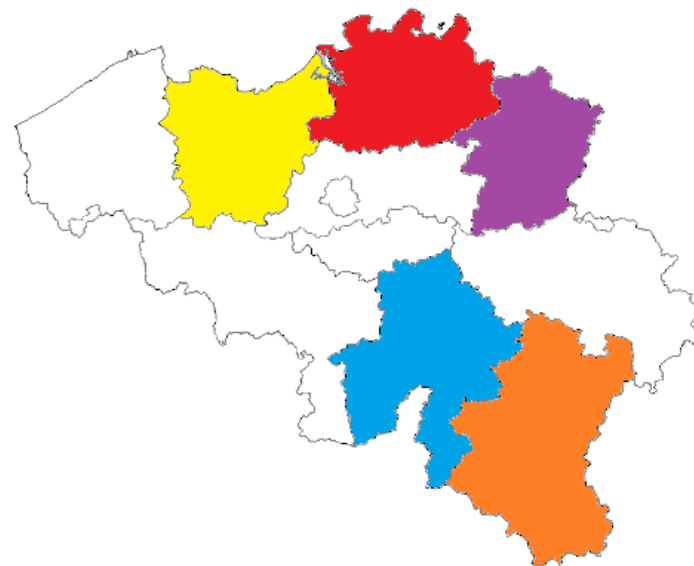
- NIU contacts the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, which asks the Antwerp Public Prosecutor's Office to take over the investigation. The Federal Prosecutor's Office wants a house searching conducted by the Federal Police.

**Wednesday, July 19, 2017, afternoon:**

- NIU transfers an initial report to the Public Prosecutor of Antwerp.



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## Example :

Wednesday, July 19, 2017, evening:

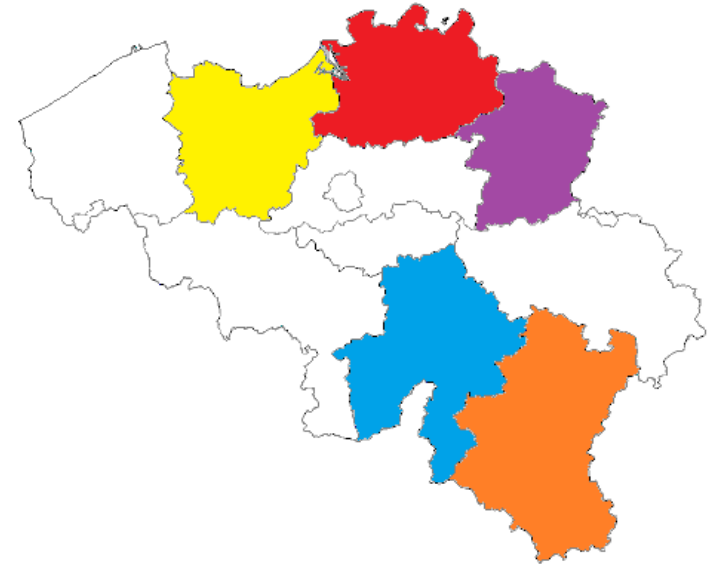
- The file is sent to the investigating judge.

Thursday, July 20, 2017, morning:

- House search, discovery of paper evidence of the illegal incorporation of Fipronil in "BIO" products.
- But obviously, no register of use.
- Seizure of computer equipment.



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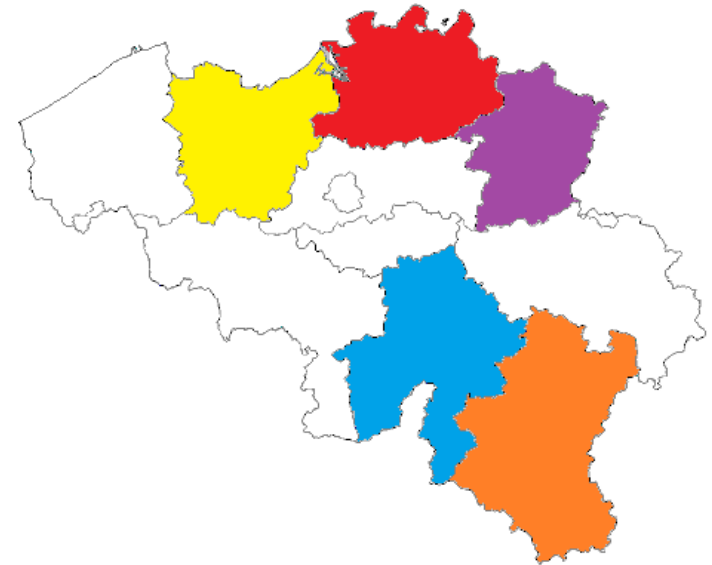
## Example :

Thursday, July 20, 2017, afternoon:

- Receipt of the analysis results of the products sampled on Monday July 17 and Tuesday July 18: Fipronil present in **food supplements** (feed) and in the **product sprayed** on farms.
- Writing a RASFF to warn other European countries.



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## Example :

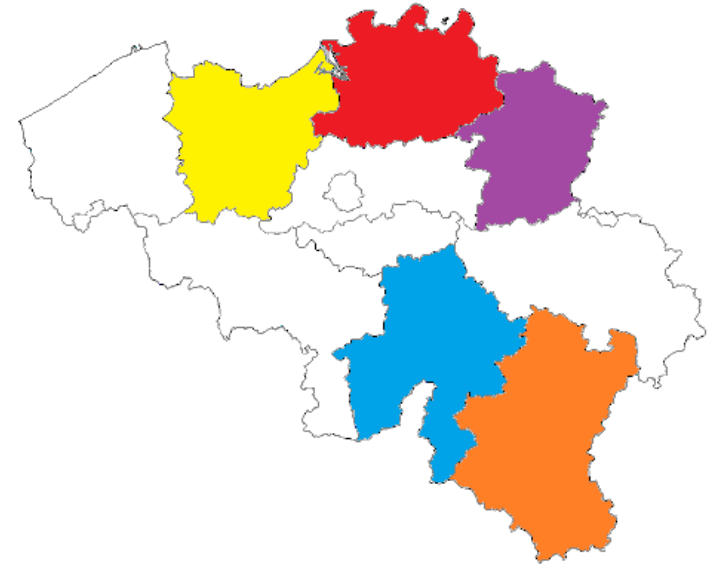
From Monday July 24, 2017 and the following weeks:

- Analysis of data entered and identification of suspicious farms.
- Given the lack of traceability, control from the FAFSC Local Units in all breeding and laying poultry farms.

**Results:** in Belgium, 32 poultry farms affected.



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# Belgian network to tackle fraud within the food chain

## Summary :

- Prohibited substance.
- Feed.
- Living animals.
- Eggs and egg products.
- Food.

➔ The whole chain has been impacted.



NIU



De Standaard

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Kopstukken Fipronil-fraude financieel gepluimd

10/11/2018 10:00 uur door Hans Decker



De kopstukken in de Fipronil-crisis – één van de gro...

De kopstukken in de Fipronil-crisis – één van de gro...

Honderden pluimveebedrijven in België en Nederland roed...

Vandaag start fipronil-proces in Antwerpen: hoofdbeklaagde komt uit Weelde



10/11/2018

WEELDE - In de zomer van fipronil. Miljoenen kippen...



Le principal suspect de la crise du fipronil

condamné à 3 ans de prison avec sursis partiel

Le tribunal correctionnel d'Anvers a condamné Patrick R. (44 ans),...



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Judgment of June 4, 2021 of the Court of First Instance of Antwerp:



## For the main suspect :

- 3 years prison, two reprieve.
- € 200.000,00 fine reprieve.

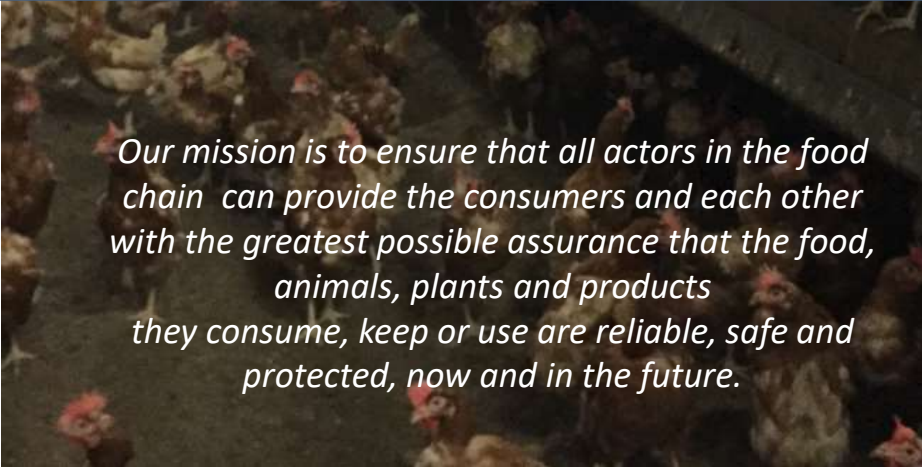
## In total, for the co-authors :

- Compensation for civil parties and procedural costs : € 26.038.096,37





Thank you !



*Our mission is to ensure that all actors in the food chain can provide the consumers and each other with the greatest possible assurance that the food, animals, plants and products they consume, keep or use are reliable, safe and protected, now and in the future.*

