

Advice 27-2008 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the evaluation of a sampling plan to detect possible contamination of head meat with central nervous system tissue and evaluation of possible corrective measures

The Scientific Committee is asked to evaluate a sampling plan, based on a laboratory test, to detect central nervous system (CNS) tissue contamination on head meat of bovine animals (i) at slaughterhouses harvesting bovine head meat, (ii) at slaughterhouses applying canalization, and (iii) in cutting plants authorized to harvest head meat. The Scientific Committee is also asked to evaluate corrective measures in regard to slaughtering processes, to be eventually applied in slaughterhouses with high prevalence of CNS contamination of head meat.

Considering the probably too low specificity of the ELISA Ridascreen test currently applied in Belgium, and considering the absence of knowledge about the current prevalence of contamination of head meat by CNS tissue in Belgian slaughterhouses, the Scientific Committee is of opinion that the application of a sampling plan will provide no pertinent information about the quality of slaughtering processes in the different slaughterhouses.

On the other hand, the Scientific Committee recommends to execute in all Belgian slaughterhouses a screening to estimate the global prevalence of CNS tissue contamination in combination with an individual survey of the slaughtering processes and their critical points with an exhaustive checklist. On basis of these obtained data, correlations between prevalence of CNS tissue contamination of head meat and presence of critical points can be established in the slaughterhouses and risk factors can be determined. In a second time, after having determined the prevalence level in each individual slaughterhouse based on present risk factors, a sampling plan can be developed to eventually propose corrective measures.

An extended list of critical points for contamination of heads and carcasses by CNS tissue in slaughterhouses and recommendations to decrease the risk of contamination (corrective measures) are proposed.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".