

Rating of food control results in the EU

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Background

- The new EU official controls regulation 2017/625 (ex 882/2004)

Art. 11.3 (Transparency of official controls):

” Competent authorities **may publish**, or make otherwise available to the public, **information about the rating of individual operators** based on the outcome of one or more official controls, provided that the following conditions are met:
(a) the **rating criteria** are objective, transparent and publicly available; and
(b) appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the **fairness, consistency and transparency** of the rating process.”

Heads of EU Food Safety Agencies (HoA)

- HoA established a working group on transparency of official controls chaired by the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira in 2015 →
- The aim was to provide guidance to MS on publishing rating results of FBO's in a way that could facilitate their common understanding in all MS
- Pre-questionnaire sent to EU/EEA Member States and two physical meetings in Helsinki 2015
- Report finalised and approved in 2017 by HoA

Pre-questionnaire

- 13 replies: BE, DK, FI, FR, IS, IT, LV, LU, MT, NL, NO, UK (England, Northern Ireland, Wales) and Scotland.
- 11 countries (BE, DK, FI, FR, IS, LU, LV, NL, NO, UK + Scotland) have or are planning to have a system for rating FBOs on the basis of their control results and publish the results.
- 12 countries participated the WG (BE, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, LU, NL, NO, UK, Scotland).

The existing rating systems – rating criteria and scope

- Rating criteria: compliance with legislative requirements
 - Food hygiene legislation (all systems)
 - Other food safety requirements e.g. labelling in some systems
- Scope: applied both to business-to-consumer and business-to-business interface
 - Restaurants etc. serving food directly to consumer covered by all systems
 - Most of the systems cover also retail and other FBO's selling food directly to consumers
 - B-to-B traders (establishments) covered in 5 countries

The existing rating systems - classification

- Number of rating classes vary from 2 to 7
- Compliance vs. food safety, minor and major shortcomings taken into account

health hazard \neq non-compliance



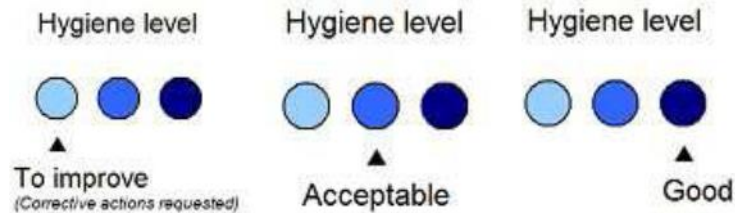
Scoring

- One symbol/score is used to describe the general rating in all systems (e.g. smileys, traffic lights, numerical grades)

BE:



FR:



FI:



DK:

- 1 😊 no remarks,
- 2 😐 a warning
- 3 😞 an injunction order or a prohibition,
- 4 😡 an administrative fine, the establishment is reported to the police for prosecution or the approval is withdrawn.

UK:

- '0' -urgent improvement required
- '1' -major improvement required
- '2' - improvement necessary
- '3' - generally satisfactory
- '4' – good
- '5' – very good

Publication of the results

- In 7 countries the results are published on the website of the CA
- In some countries the results are published at the premises of FBO
- In some countries also the individual inspection reports are publicly available (shortened version)
- In some countries only the symbols are published

Experience on using rating systems-1

– Consumers

- improved food safety
- consumer satisfaction increased
- media interest on food hygiene – benefit
- public knowledge and awareness on food safety and OC

– Food business operators

- better compliance with the legal requirements
- consistency of OC increased
- FBOs have better contact with inspectors
- inspections are more predictable
- tangible for FBO to achieve desirable things
- FBOs get better insurance premium with higher rating, better liability
- low rated businesses cannot hide anymore

Experience on using the rating systems-2

– Competent authorities and official controls

- improved work of Cas, clear criteria for compliance
- follow-up inspection frequency increased
- planned inspections decreased (risk-based focus)
- inspectors pleased or not pleased (fear of lack of performance and lack of back-up from management)
- pressure for CA to give better rating
- need of resources when starting up the systems
- lazy inspectors cannot hide anymore

Working group (WG):

The main objectives for rating systems

- To improve food hygiene and safety standards and to increase consumer confidence
- To drive up FBO compliance with the legal requirements
- To increase transparency for consumers on individual FBO performance
- To improve food safety control systems (harmonisation, enforcement, effectiveness)

WG: The minimum elements in rating systems

- Rating criteria
 - Food safety legislation
 - If appropriate, publicly available guidance by CA
 - Consistent assessment against criteria; standardised guidelines, checklists etc.
 - Standardised calculation of the final rating/evaluation
 - Rating criteria should differentiate compliance/non-compliance and preferably minor and major non-compliances
 - Observable, measurable, evidence based and comparable between FBOs and inspectors
 - Recommended to have publicly available guidelines on the rating process

WG: The contents and the scope of rating systems

- The legislation used as rating criteria should contain at least the requirements with relevance to food safety, consumer confidence and public health, e.g. food hygiene, labelling
- System can be applied to all categories of FBOs, i.e. B-to-C serving or selling food directly to consumers, as well as, B-to-B establishments and traders depending on the interest and needs of the MS

WG: Publication of the rating results

- The symbols should be as far as possible self-explanatory or supported with sufficient and easily accessible information about them (e.g. website)
- Open data policy should be promoted
- Results should be visible at the premises or the website of the FBO, and also centrally (website of CA)
- Public information should clearly disclose health hazards and non-compliances
- More detailed information on results, e.g. inspection report or summary of it can also be published

WG: Implications to other aspects of food controls

- In many countries the rating results are taken into account in risk classification of FBOs
 - impact on the inspection frequency
 - reduced frequency for better performers

WG: Some questions

- Level of transparency, level of public information?
- Evaluation of systems
- How long would the results be valid?
- Appeal mechanism?
- Calculation of the final result, weighing?

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?