EU Food Safety Policy on Spices and Herbs

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The EU food safety policy covers
- biological
- chemical
- physical hazards in food.
EU Food Law
Regulation 178/2002

High level of the protection of human health and consumers' interest
Farm to fork approach
Primary responsibility of a food business operator for food safety
Risk analysis principles
EU Food Law
Regulation 178/2002

Precautionary principle
Transparency
International standards
Non-discriminatory measures
Traceability
Emergency measures
Food hygiene
Regulation 852/2004

General hygiene provisions for primary production in Annex I:
• *Hygiene provisions*
• *Record keeping*
• *Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) (no HACCP in primary production)*

General hygiene provisions for FBOs after primary production in Annex II
Irradiation Directives 1999/2 and 1999/3

Irradiation of dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetable seasonings is authorised at EU level.

Irradiation must take place in approved facilities.

Irradiated foods must be labelled.
Contaminants
Regulation 1881/2006

Maximum levels for contaminants:

• Aflatoxins and ochratoxin A) in certain spices (chilli, paprika, peppers, nutmeg, ginger, curcuma)
• Cadmium in fresh herbs
Pesticide residues
Regulation 1881/2006

Maximum residue levels for pesticides are available in the EU Pesticides database:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/pesticides_database/
Food additives
Regulation 1333/2008

Only very few food additives are authorised in spices:

• *Sulphites in ginger*
• *Cellulose and sodium potassium and calcium salts of fatty acids in dried products*
Official controls
Regulation 882/2004

Official controls have to be:
regular
risk based
cover all stages of production
non-discriminatory
carried out without prior warning
Increased import checks

Imported food may be subject to increased checks in the case of known or emerging risks.

Main sources of information include reports from EU Member States, RASFF notifications and reports of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO).

List of products subject to increased check laid down in Annex I to Regulation 669/2009.
Safeguard measures

If increased checks reveal that problems continue to occur safeguard measures may be adopted:

- Sampling and testing of each consignment in the exporting country
- Certification of each consignment
- Corrective action plan from the exporting country
- FVO inspection in the exporting country before measures are lifted.
RASFF

Food safety incidents are notified via RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed).

RASFF notifications are available in the RASF Portal:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal
Food safety incidents

- Unauthorised colours (Sudan dyes) in chilli, curry and curcuma
- Aflatoxins in spices such as chilli, pepper and nutmeg.
- Pesticide residues mainly in imported fresh herbs.
- Pathogenic micro-organisms mainly in imported fresh herbs but also in dried spices.
More information

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/index_en.htm
Thank you for your attention!