

Country Profile: Spain

Canals Caballero A., Alonso Andicoberry C.

in

Sanchís V. (ed.), Liebana E. (ed.), Romagosa I. (ed.), López-Francos A. (ed.).
Food safety challenges for mediterranean products

Zaragoza : CIHEAM

Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 111

2015

pages 179-184

Article available on line / Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<http://om.ciheam.org/article.php?IDPDF=00007586>

To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Canals Caballero A., Alonso Andicoberry C. **Country Profile: Spain**. In : Sanchís V. (ed.), Liebana E. (ed.), Romagosa I. (ed.), López-Francos A. (ed.). *Food safety challenges for mediterranean products*. Zaragoza : CIHEAM, 2015. p. 179-184 (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 111)



<http://www.ciheam.org/>
<http://om.ciheam.org/>

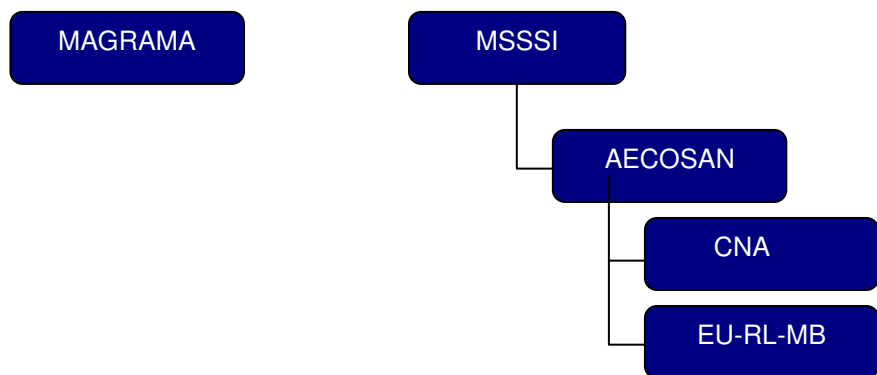
Country Profile: Spainⁱ

I – Key priorities for risk assessment

Risk assessment in regard to food safety and nutrition is done by AECOSAN's scientific committee, with the scientific and technical support of the Area of Risk Assessment. The reports are prepared to meet the risk management needs (fit-to-purpose).

II – Major public actors involved in food safety (including risk assessment, management and communication)

Simplified chart of the public organizations involved in food safety and risk assessment in *Spain*



- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA)
- Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI)
 - Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition (AECOSAN)
 - National Centre for Food (CNA)
 - European Union Reference Laboratory for Marine Biotoxins (EU-RL-MB)
- Regional and local authorities

Main public organisations involved in food safety and roles – Spain

Organisation	Main areas of remit	Risk assessment	Risk management	Risk communication
MAGRAMA – Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment	Plant health, plant protection products, feed, mineral water, novel foods, genetic engineering, residues of veterinary medicinal products, zoonoses, contaminants	x	x	
MSSSI – Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality	Plant protection products, control and inspection of food of animal and plant origin at border inspection posts	x	x	
AECOSAN – Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition	Mineral waters, drinking water, food supplements, novel foods, residues of veterinary medicinal products, zoonoses, contaminants, nutrition	x	x	x
CNA – National Centre for Food	Residues in live animals and products, zoonosis, mycotoxins, PAHs, plant protection products, biocontam.	x		
EU-RL-MB – European Union Reference Laboratory for Marine Biotoxins	Marine biotoxins	x		
Regional and local authorities	Implementation of feed and food official controls		x	x

Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 is the central foundation for food legislation in Spain. Infringement of food regulations can lead to measures under criminal law and consumer damage claims under civil law, whereby the final decision rests with the courts. Government measures with regard to food safety are often based on scientific risk assessment. However, the final decision on the legality of governmental measures rests with the courts.

In Spain there is no institutional separation of risk assessment and risk management. Risk assessments are published on the Internet unless there are statutory provisions that prohibit this.

The decentralized political organization of Spain distributes competences in food safety. The Autonomous Communities are the principal official control authorities and the central Administration deals with most of the foreign duties and are the contact point for EU and international organizations. In addition the central and regional competences are separated between primary and post-primary production.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA)

Tasks of MAGRAMA:

- Agricultural policy, food safety

- Risk assessment
- Risk management

Website: <http://www.magrama.gob.es>

MAGRAMA deals with agricultural policy, feed safety and the safety of food of animal and plant origin during primary production. MAGRAMA prepares draft legislation and is responsible for the coordination of state food inspections in this area. It is also responsible for the preparation of risk assessments with regards to residues of plant protection products and animal feed and it is the regulatory authority for plant protection products and pesticides.

The area of work of MAGRAMA extends beyond food safety to plant health, animal health and animal welfare.

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI)

Tasks of MSSSI

- Health policy, food safety
- Risk management

Website: <http://www.msssi.gob.es>

MSSSI deals with health policy and food safety. It also prepares draft legislation in the field of food (secondary food production) and is responsible for the coordination of state food inspections in this area. It is in charge of control and inspection of food of animal and plant origin during import, export and transit. MSSSI is also responsible for the control and monitoring of residues of plant protection products in food of animal origin. The regulatory authority for veterinary medicinal products is the Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products, a subordinate agency of MSSSI.

Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition (AECOSAN)

Tasks of AECOSAN

- Risk assessment
- Risk communication
- Risk management
- Codex Contact Point
- EFSA Focal Point
- RASFF/ INFOSAN Contact Point

Website: <http://www.aecosan.msssi.gob.es/>

AECOSAN is a subordinate specialist authority within the portfolio of MSSSI. AECOSAN is the competent authority for all legislative projects with regards to safety of food available in Spain; this includes incorporation of EU directives into national law as well as new national regulations. As a scientific institution that enjoys independence in terms of the results of its opinions, AECOSAN prepares expert reports on risk assessment, particularly in conjunction with novel foods, residues of veterinary medicinal products, food supplements, zoonoses and mineral waters, drinking water. AECOSAN prepares recommendations for risk reduction and identifies new health risks. AECOSAN is also responsible for the risk management of GMOs (food). Other main areas of AECOSAN are research and transparent communication with the public at large, science and other involved or interested circles. AECOSAN is also involved in the coordination

of state food inspections. The area of work of AECOSAN extends beyond food safety to nutrition.

National Centre for Food (CNA)

Website: <http://aesan.msssi.gob.es/CNA/web/home.shtml>

The National Centre for Food carries out tasks of scientific and technical support and laboratory analytical control.

It is the National Reference Laboratory for the cases established in the community legislation: detection of residues in live animals and animal products, food-borne zoonosis, control of mycotoxins in foodstuffs, control of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) residues in foodstuffs, control of plant-protection product residues in foodstuffs, analysis of milk and milk products, control of bacteriological and viral contamination of bivalve mollusks. It is also an approved laboratory by the USA Department of Agriculture for research of *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* spp. and veterinary medicinal products residues, pesticides, heavy metals, species identification, etc. in meat and meat products for exporting to the USA. Furthermore the National Food Centre is accredited by the Spanish National Accreditation Entity for tests No. 178/LE 397 and 178/LE 905. The CNA is part of the ENGL network of the European Commission (Enforcement National GMO Laboratories).

European Union Reference Laboratory for Marine Biotoxins (EU-RL-MB)

Website: <http://aesan.msssi.gob.es/en/CRLMB/web/home.shtml>

The **EURLMB** is the **European Union Reference Laboratory for Marine Biotoxins**. As such, it coordinates the activities of a network of National Reference Laboratories (NRL), established in each EU Member State, regarding the methodologies applied to control marine biotoxins in shellfish, in order to protect public health and guarantee a maximum level of food safety.

The Marine Biotoxins Laboratory in Vigo (Spain) was designated as EURLMB in 1993. Since 2004, the EURLMB is under the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

Regional and local authorities

The regional and local levels in Spain consist of 17 autonomous regions, two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla) and 52 provinces. They are the competent authorities responsible for the implementation of feed and food official controls.

III – Food safety alerts management in Spain

1. Does the competent authority (or authorities) for food safety have an established mechanism to evaluate and react to food safety crises (crises management mechanism)?	Yes
2. If the reply to Q1 is yes, does this mechanism include a committee or a body with pre-determined representatives?	Yes , a committee with pre-determined representatives exists and it can include additional members if needed for a specific crisis
3. If there is an established mechanism for crisis management (the reply to Q1 is Yes):	
3a. Do actors with risk assessment capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes
3b. Do actors with risk management capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes
3c. Do actors with risk communication capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes

IV – Characteristics of the food sector in Spain

Number of enterprises¹: approx. 30,000. 96.2% are SMEs (<50 employees)

% of the industrial sector: 17.4%

% of the industrial workforce: 20%

% of industrial turnover: 86,298 million Euros (2012). 14% of total industrial net sales and 7.6% of Spanish GDP.

Top subsectors (in terms of number of enterprises): (Data from 2011; from highest to lowest) Meat industries; alcoholic beverages; dairy industries.

Top subsectors (in terms of turnover): (Data from 2011; from highest to lowest): flour, starch and starchy products; beverages; meat industries. beverages, meat industries,

V – Civil Society Organisations

In Spain there are several CSOs with relevance to the food sector. Some focus on consumer rights and consumer protection (not necessarily specific on the food sector), while others relate with food security. Finally there are several NGOs with ecological/conservationist interests, which actively participate in the civil society.

Amongst those, the consumer associations engage in the public dialogue for new legislation or market regulation regarding foodstuffs representing the interest of the consumers. For example,

¹ Data obtained from the Federation of Enterprises of Food and Beverages, excluded primary production: http://www.fiab.es/archivos/documentoMenu/documentomenu_20130510124729.pdf

they are represented at AECOSAN via the Institutional Commission and the Advisory Board, both collegiate organs of the Agency.

Other institutions, such as the MAGRAMA and the MSSSI, have a public space for consultation. The consulted topics vary (draft legislation, plans, programs and strategies, environmental assessments, notification of GMOs deliberate releases and contained use, etc.). There are approximately 11 consumer associations with nation-wide coverage.

ⁱ **Country profile elaborated by:**

Ana CANALS CABALLERO, Cristina ALONSO ANDICOBERRY

Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition (AECOSAN)

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality

E-mail: acanals@msssi.es