



Hilvarenbeek, the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2009.

Dear Mrs/Mr.,

EWFC is the organisation, which represents, at the European level, the national professional associations of food and meat inspectors and food chemists in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Austria, Luxembourg and Cyprus. In almost every other member state we have contact persons.

In the EWFC we want to work in partnership with the European Commission and Competent Authorities to produce better food safety.

We have gained a lot of experience of the requirements of food producing plants during our work. We can provide information about the daily European consumer protection problems in the food and meat industry, we can also suggest practical solutions

At our recent board meeting, we decided to write to you, as the proposed democratically elected representatives of European citizens, to state our position on certain developments in European consumer protection, especially in the area of food and meat safety.

We disagree with the proposals from the competent authorities of various member states:

1. to pass the actual performance of meat inspection functions to food business operators (FBO),
2. the proposed privatisation of food inspection in other commercial premises and
3. the use of private laboratories in the analysis of food samples taken as part of the official control process.

We strongly believe such changes will lead to a conflict of interest, that will in turn reduce the credibility and effectiveness of the inspection and analysis systems.

Our members report from across Europe, that where the organisation, that is being controlled, pays the controller, either directly or indirectly, such a transfer produces conflicts of interest.

For example:

- We have all seen recently, what has happened in the banking industry, where commercial organisations have not been controlled sufficiently by the independent enforcement of regulation.

- We also know, that the BSE outbreak was created, when long term regulation and control of animal feed was relaxed for short-term commercial gain.

In recent times the European public has also seen the unfit meat scandal in Germany, the melamine contamination, Salmonella in chocolate and recently the infected Gorgonzola.

Above that;

Training and educational requirements for food and meat inspectors are very different across Europe; therefore, there is no uniformity of standard and no ability for inspectors to work in other member states.

We consider the following as fundamental for adequate consumer protection:

I. That the many risks to the consumer associated with producing meat for food from animals should continue to be controlled by officials of the competent authorities, therefore ensuring the controllers are independent from commercial pressure.

The above is especially true in times of food or economic crisis, when such commercial pressures on the FBO are increased.

II. A uniform system of training for meat and food inspectors and food chemists should be established across Europe, both for new officials and to improve the performance of existing inspectors.

Some current EU training courses are very good, but there are too few places for food and meat inspectors.

As a political organisation, that intends to represent the wishes of the population of Europe, we respectfully ask you to set out to us your position on the points of concern, we have raised above.

Kind regards,

Jan van de Loo,  
Secretary-general EWFC,  
Groot Loo 16  
NL 5081 BL Hilvarenbeek  
The Netherlands  
Email: [postbus@vandeloo.demon.nl](mailto:postbus@vandeloo.demon.nl)