

**Act on Food Hygiene of Foodstuffs of Animal Origin
(1195/1996, amendments up to 407/2002 included)**

Chapter 1
General provisions

Purpose and scope of application of the Act

Section 1

- (1) The objective of this Act is to ensure the hygienic quality of foodstuffs of animal origin and prevent the spread of infections from animals to humans via foodstuffs.

Section 2

- (1) This Act applies to the handling of foodstuffs of animal origin, hygienic quality requirements, control and inspections prior to retail. The Act also applies to the control and inspections of foodstuffs of animal origin imported to Finland from the other Member States of the European Union (*Member State*) in all units which first receive the consignment concerned (*first destination*).
- (2) Import requirements laid down by Decision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry by virtue of the Act on Veterinary Border Inspection (1192/1996) prior to the entry into force of this Act shall be complied with. (803/1999)

Section 2 a

- (1) The provisions concerning Member States under this Act also apply to Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland to the extent required in the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

Delimitation of the scope of application

Section 3

- (1) This Act does not apply to:
 - 1) private households;
 - 2) handling of foodstuffs of animal origin at retail outlets when the foodstuffs are sold directly to the final consumer from these premises;
 - 3) handling of foodstuffs of animal origin by mass caterers when the foodstuffs concerned are sold or served directly to the final consumer; and
 - 4) transportations from wholesale stores.

Section 4

- (1) The extent to which this Act applies to meat, milk, fisheries products, eggs, honey, and other foodstuffs of animal origin and products derived from these is laid down by decree.
- (2) It may also be laid down by decree that the competent ministry may issue further provisions on the application of this Act to foodstuffs of animal origin as required by the Community legislation.
- (3) The provisions concerning the competent ministry laid down in this Act also apply to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, unless otherwise provided by Government Decree. (1112/2000)

Relationship to certain statutes and definitions

Section 5

- (1) Provisions on the health of the personnel handling foodstuffs of animal origin in plants, fishing vessels and production farms are laid down in the Act on Infectious Diseases (583/86) and Act on Health Protection (763/94). Provisions on the quality of household water used in plants and production farms are laid down in the Act on Health Protection. Provisions on combating and preventing animal diseases are laid down in the Act on Animal Diseases (55/80), and provisions on the medication of animals are laid down in the Act on Medicating Animals (402/90).
- (2) Provisions on veterinary border inspection and conditions for imports from countries outside the European Community are laid down in the Act on Veterinary Border Inspection (1192/1996).

Section 6

In this Act,

- 1) *plant* means a facility or building where foodstuffs of animal origin are manufactured, stored or handled; and
- 2) *control authority* means the National Food Agency, State Provincial Office, State authority referred to in section 12(3), municipal control authority, municipal official engaged in tasks pursuant to this Act, and State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspections.

Chapter 2

Authorities

Section 7

- (1) The supreme authority in the control of the compliance with this Act and provisions issued under it is the competent ministry.

Section 8

- (1) The National Food Agency steers and controls the compliance with this Act and provisions issued under it subject to the competent ministry. (1112/2000)

Section 9

- (1) The State Provincial Office steers and controls the control of the compliance with this Act and provisions issued under it in the provinces. (1112/2000)

Section 10

- (1) The municipality is responsible for the control and inspections pursuant to this Act, unless otherwise provided in subsection 2. The municipality is also obliged to assist the State in the control of contaminants. The municipality is entitled to a reimbursement from the State for carrying out these tasks.
- (2) However, the State is responsible for the control and inspections at slaughterhouses as well as control in plants operating adjacent to slaughterhouses and implementation of the national control programme for contaminants. Provisions on the organisation of the State control and inspections as well as plants which are to be considered slaughterhouses are issued by decree.
- (3) Inspection of the state of health of a live animal connected to meat inspection in places other than slaughterhouses or places of slaughter may also be carried out by an authorised veterinarian who does not work for the municipality or federation of municipalities. If, however, the animal should be rejected in the inspection, the matter must be dealt with by a veterinarian holding an office in the municipality or federation of municipalities.

Section 11

- (1) The control and inspections in municipalities is managed by a board or other body with several members appointed by the municipality which in this Act is referred to as the municipal control authority.
- (2) The Municipal Council may authorise the board or other body to delegate its authority to an official or section subject to it.

Section 12

- (1) The municipality must organise the control and inspection tasks assigned to it by virtue of this Act. In order to carry out the control and inspection tasks, the municipality or federation of municipalities must have staff with adequate expertise in food control and, when specifically required for the control of the legislation of the European Community, an authorised veterinarian holding an office in the municipality or municipal federation who is well qualified in food hygiene.
- (2) The municipalities and municipal federations may agree that the tasks set out to the veterinarian of a municipality or federation of municipalities under this Act may be assigned to a veterinarian holding an office in another municipality or federation of municipalities subject to public liability.
- (3) The municipalities and federations of municipalities may also agree with the competent State authority that the State authority carries out inspections relating to control pursuant to this Act. In this case the State authority must notify any shortcomings found in the inspection to the competent authority of the municipality or federation of municipalities, who takes the necessary further measures. In urgent cases the State authority may also issue orders and prohibitions which are necessary to prevent significant health damages. The matter must be submitted to the municipal control authority for decision without delay.

Section 12a

- (1) The municipality may agree with another municipality or federation of municipalities that a task provided by this Act to the municipality or municipal authority where competence may be transferred to an official may be assigned to an official of another municipality or federation of municipalities subject to public liability. The federation of municipalities may make an agreement referred to above with another federation of municipalities subject to the consent of the member municipalities of the federation. (694/2001)

Chapter 3

Requirements concerning foodstuffs of animal origin

Section 13

- (1) Foodstuffs of animal origin must be fit for the intended use and they may not contain any properties which may be harmful to human health.
- (2) The spread of infections from animals to humans via foodstuffs must be prevented as efficiently as possible under all circumstances.

Section 14

- (1) Animals intended for food production must be cared for, handled, and transported in a way which secures their high hygienic quality.

Chapter 4

Requirements concerning plants and their operations

Section 15

- (1) Before starting up operations or after essential changes in these, all slaughterhouses and plants adjacent to these must have been approved by the National Food Agency, while other plants must be approved by the municipal control authority. The approval is applied for in writing. A plant is approved provided that it meets the requirements set out in this Act and under it. (1112/2000)

Section 16

- (1) Dairy farms and, as far as required by the legislation of the European Community, fishing vessels shall be registered by the municipal control authority. The municipal control authority shall also keep a list of all first destinations subject to its control.
- (2) The municipal control authority shall notify the competent State Provincial Office of the approval of a plant, termination of operations, and cancelling of an approval of a plant. The municipal control authority shall also notify the State Provincial Office of all the fishing vessels it has registered and first destinations it has listed as well as the changes in their operations. The State Provincial Office shall deliver this data without delay to the National Food Agency, which keeps records of the plants, fishing vessels and first destinations as well as issues a number to the plants and fishing vessels. (1112/2000)
- (3) Provisions on the obligation concerning keeping of records and notification in plants, first destinations and production farms are issued by decree. It may also be provided by decree that the competent ministry may issue further provisions on the obligation concerning keeping of records and notification referred to above in this subsection.

Section 17

- (1) The constructions, equipment and operations of a plant, production farm and fishing vessel must be such that they allow the production of foodstuffs of animal origin which meet the requirements set out in this Act and provisions issued under it.

Section 18

- (1) Upon request the control authority must, to the extent possible, give advice necessary for making a plant, production farm or fishing vessel to comply with this Act and the provisions issued under it.
- (2) The control authority must also control that foodstuffs of animal origin exported outside the European Community meet the requirements for food hygiene set by the purchasing country concerned.

Section 19

- (1) It must be possible to find out the origin of the animals coming to a plant and foodstuffs of animal origin coming to plants and first destinations, as well as to identify the animals as set out by the competent ministry.

Section 20

- (1) Production farms, fishing vessels or plants may not supply products of animal origin which do not meet the requirements laid down in this Act or provisions issued under it to be used as foodstuffs, nor may the plants and first destinations receive such products.

Section 21

- (1) A plant must make sure that no shortcomings in terms of the food hygiene may arise. For this purpose the plant must at its own cost draw up and implement a control system which is approved by a State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspections or municipal veterinarian responsible for the control of the plant (*own-check system*). If requested, the National Food Agency must assist the authorities mentioned above in the approval of the own-check system. (1112/2000)
- (2) A plant must make sure that the results from own-checks are available to the official carrying out the control of the plant. A plant must notify any significant shortcomings relating to food hygiene found in the own-checks to the State official or municipal control authority responsible for the control of the plant without delay.
- (3) A plant must remove from the market foodstuffs of animal origin which might cause serious damage to human health.

Section 22

- (1) A municipality must make sure that the operations of the plants, first destinations, fishing vessels and dairy production farms subject to its control as well as their own-check systems are checked regularly. When necessary, the municipality must also carry out inspections on other production farms.

Chapter 5 Control

Control authority's right to information, samples and inspection

Section 23

- (1) The control authority has the right to obtain the necessary information for carrying out the control from the State and municipal authorities as well as from the operators and persons subject to the obligations set out in this Act.
- (2) The right to information also concerns information needed for control which would otherwise be considered confidential as it concerns personal business or professional activities or financial position or state of health of a private person.

Section 24

- (1) The control authority has the right to carry out inspections and examinations required for the control as well as to gain access to all facilities where operations referred to this Act are carried out or where significant information in respect of the control of the compliance with this Act is kept. Facilities used for residential purposes may be inspected only if there is reasonable doubt that the person concerned is guilty of actions which are subject to punishment under this Act.
- (2) The provisions concerning the right of Finnish authorities to gain access to facilities where operations referred to in this Act are carried out as well as information also concern inspectors referred to in the legislation of the European Community or other international agreements binding Finland as required by the binding international commitment concerned.

Section 25

- (1) If the control authority finds in connection with control or inspection that a foodstuff of animal origin contain contaminants in excess of the levels laid down in the relevant provisions, a provincial veterinary officer or other veterinarian appointed by the State Provincial Office has the right to inspect the production farm where the foodstuffs came from and take all samples needed for the inspection without reimbursement. In this case the provincial veterinary officer or other veterinarian appointed by the State Provincial Office has the right to information, samples and inspection laid down in sections 23 and 24.
- (2) A production farm must provide sufficient assistance to the veterinarian who carries out the inspection and takes samples.

Section 26

- (1) The control authority has the right to take all the samples needed for the control without reimbursement. The control authority also has the right to inspect all the machinery, implements and facilities used in the operations.

Section 27

- (1) An operator who engages in operations referred to in this Act must at his or her own cost yield the control authority all the assistance needed for the control and inspection as well as take the samples needed for the control as required by the control authority.

Orders and prohibitions

Section 28

- (1) If a plant, fishing vessel, production farm or foodstuff facility used as first destination (*objects of control*) or their operations fail to meet the requirements set out in this Act or provisions issued under it, the control authority must urge the person(s) concerned a request to correct the faults. In this case the control authority may issue the necessary orders and prohibitions to prevent health damages.

Section 29

- (1) If a foodstuff of animal origin, the handling or transport of the foodstuffs, or the circumstances during transport fail to meet the requirements set out in this Act or provisions issued under it, the control authority may prohibit its delivery for foodstuff or use in the manufacture of foodstuffs. In such a case the control authority may order the measures to be taken. Foodstuffs coming from another Member State or a country outside the European Community may be ordered returned to the country of origin, subject to conditions laid down by the competent ministry. When necessary for health reasons, the control authority may also order the foodstuffs destroyed. The order of the control authority should be given in a way which minimises the economic losses to the owner of the property.
- (2) Unless not acceptable due to health reasons or otherwise provided by law, an operator may select the measure mentioned in subsection 1 to be taken. The operator is responsible for the costs of measures ordered by the control authority.

Section 30

- (1) In urgent cases a decision referred to in sections 28 and 29 can be made by a municipal official carrying out control tasks. The matter must be submitted to the municipal control authority for decision without delay.

Section 31

- (1) Prior to making a decision referred to in sections 28-30, the authority must reserve the operator or his or her representative an opportunity to be heard. In urgent cases the opportunity to be heard must be reserved only if this can be arranged without delay. The operator must be notified of the decision immediately.

Penalty payment, threat to order measures taken at the defaulter's expense, and threat of interruption

Section 32

- (1) The State Provincial Office may impose a penalty payment, threat to order measures taken at the defaulter's expense, and threat of interruption to reinforce an order or prohibition issued by a State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspections. The municipal control authority has the same right for the part of an order and prohibition issued by the control authority or municipal official controlling the object concerned.
- (2) In matters concerning penalty payment, threat to order measures taken at the defaulter's expense, and threat of interruption, the relevant provisions laid down in the Penalty Payment Act (1113/90) apply.

Seizure

Section 33

- (1) The control authority may seize a foodstuff of animal origin if there is doubt that a procedure which is in violation of this Act or provisions issued under it causes immediate risk to human health and measures set out in sections 28-30 and 32 are not considered sufficient.
- (2) In urgent cases a decision on seizure and a decision referred to in section 35(2) can be made by a municipal official carrying out control tasks. The matter must be submitted to the municipal control authority for decision without delay.

Section 34

- (1) The seizure must be made in the presence of a witness. The relevant provisions laid down in section 31 shall apply to the right of the operator or his or her representative to be heard before making the decision on seizure as well as notification of the decision. The person whose property has been seized must give a certificate showing the quantity of the seized property and the reason for seizure.
- (2) Samples from the seized property may be taken for examinations without reimbursement.

Keeping and use of seized property

Section 35

- (1) When necessary, the seized property may be kept at the plant or foodstuff facility used as the first destination. The seized property must be appropriately labelled or kept in a sealed or otherwise marked storage facility. To allow any studies which may be needed to establish the hygienic quality of the property, it must be stored in a way which keeps the quality as good as possible.
- (2) The competent control authority makes the decision on the purposes for which the operator must use or sell the seized property. The decision must be made immediately after the seizure. If examinations of the seized property are needed to establish the hygienic quality of the foodstuff, the decision must be made immediately after the results are available. The decision must be made in a way which minimises the economic losses to the operator.
- (3) The decision on seizure may set a time limit during which the operator must take the measures ordered by the control authority. If the operator fails to comply with the time limit, the measures may be ordered taken at the operator's expense. A decision on this is made by the State

Provincial Office for the part of an order issued by the State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspections and the municipal control authority for the part of its own orders.

Section 36

- (1) If an initial investigation authority has confiscated foodstuffs of animal origin by virtue of the Coercive Measures Act (450/87), the initial investigation authority may sell the property only for a purpose approved by the control authority. If required for health reasons, the control authority may also prohibit the sale and order the property destroyed.

Section 37

- (1) The competent control authority decides on the procedure to be followed in respect of seized or confiscated property if no charges of violating this Act are brought or if the court of law does not order the seized property forfeit to the State.
- (4) In such a case the seized or confiscated property must be ordered returned to the owner if this is not prevented by any health reasons. In other cases the property must be yielded to the owner to be used or sold for purposes approved by the control authority. The decision must be made in a way which minimises the economic losses to the owner of the property.

Withdrawal of the approval or registration of a plant

Section 38

- (1) If the conditions in a plant or fishing vessel or their operations do not meet the requirements laid down in this Act or provisions issued under it and the faults have not been corrected as urged by the control authority, the authority which approved or registered the plant or fishing vessel must oblige the plant or fishing vessel to correct the shortcomings. If required for health reasons, the approval or registration may be withdrawn temporarily in full or partly for the time the matter is being processed.
- (2) If the plant or fishing vessel does not follow the urge to correct the faults, the authority which approved or registered the plant or fishing vessel must withdraw the approval or registration.
- (3) The municipal control authority must take the measures referred to in subsections 1 and 2 at the request of the National Food Agency. (1112/2000)

Control of provisions concerning the water used in a plant and health of the personnel

Section 39

- (1) The control authorities set out in this Act shall make sure that the water used in plants and on production farms and fishing vessels and the health of the personnel handling foodstuffs of animal origin in these meet the requirements laid down in the Act on Infectious Diseases and Act on Health Protection or by virtue of these acts.
- (2) The provisions concerning the control measures laid down in this Chapter are also applied when the water or health referred to in subsection 1 does not meet the requirements laid down in the acts and provisions mentioned in subsection 1. The competent control authority must notify the shortcomings referred to above to the competent control authority set out in the Act on Infectious Diseases or Act on Health Protection, who takes action as considered necessary.

Chapter 6

Appeal

Appeal against a decision by a State veterinary officer for meat inspections

Section 40

- (1) A decision of a State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspections may be appealed to the Provincial Administrative Court as laid down in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/96). A meat inspection decision may be appealed by the owner, possessor or producer of the meat. A meat inspection decision must be followed even if an appeal had been lodged.
- (2) A meat inspection decision must be given in writing only if this is requested by the owner, possessor, or producer of the meat. The reasons for the decisions must be given, and instructions for appeal must be attached. A written meat inspection decision is sent to the person concerned by letter. Unless otherwise shown, the person concerned is considered to have received the decision on the seventh day from the day when the letter was left to be delivered by post.
- (3) The period for appeal referred to in subsection 1 above is calculated from the receipt of the meat inspection decision in writing. However, the appeal must be lodged within six months from the date when the decision was made.

Appeal against a decision by a municipal authority

Section 41

- (1) A decision made by a municipal official by virtue of this Act is not subject to appeal. A person who is not satisfied with a decision may lodge a claim for correction to a board or other body referred to in section 11. The claim for correction must be lodged in writing within 14 days from the receipt of service of the decision. Instructions for lodging a claim for correction must be attached to a decision by a municipal official. A claim for correction must be processed without delay.
- (2) A decision made by a municipal board or other body referred to in section 11 by virtue of this Act may be appealed to the Provincial Administrative Court as provided in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act.
- (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections 1 and 2, the provisions of section 40 apply to a meat inspection decision by a municipal veterinarian carrying out meat inspections and appeal against such a decision. If a live animal has been inspected in a place other than a slaughterhouse or place of slaughter, a decision on the result of an inspection of a live animal must always be given in writing.

Section 42

- (1) The provisions on appeal laid down in the Municipalities Act (365/95) apply to appeal against a decision on rates referred to in section 50(1).

Appeal against a decision by other authority

Section 43

- (1) Provisions on appeal against a decision by the State Provincial Office and National Food Agency by virtue of this Act are laid down in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act. (1112/2000)

Denial of appeal concerning penalty payment

Section 44

- (1) A decision on penalty payment is not subject to appeal.

Enforcement

Section 45

- (1) A decision issued under sections 28-30, 32, 33, 35-38, 40 and 41 may provide that the decision shall be complied before it is legally valid or a claim for rectification has been dealt with, unless otherwise provided by the appellate authority or the authority dealing with the claim for rectification. A claim for rectification and appeal must be processed as urgent.

Chapter 7

Penal provisions

Penal provisions

Section 46

- (1) Punishment for a health offence against this Act or provisions issued under it is laid down in Chapter 44, section 1 of the Penal Code (39/1889).
- (2) A person who with intent or through carelessness
 - 1) uses as foodstuff or handles, transports, imports, or exports foodstuffs of animal origin in violation of this Act or provisions issued under it,
 - 2) engages in activities referred to in this Act in a plant or fishing vessel which has not been approved or registered in accordance with the Act or whose approval or registration has been temporarily or permanently withdrawn under section 38 or which does not have an approved own-check system referred to in section 21,
 - 3) violates an order, prohibition, or decision on seizure issued by an authority by virtue of this Act,
 - 4) despite a reminder of the controller neglects the keeping of records or notification referred to in section 16(3) or notification referred to in section 21(2),
 - 5) despite a reminder or prohibition of the control authority supplies foodstuffs from the production farm which do not comply with the requirements laid down in this Act or provisions issued under it from the production farm, or
 - 6) neglects the obligation to yield assistance provided in section 27,shall be sentenced to a fine for *violation of food hygiene*, unless a more severe punishment is provided in other law.
- (2) The control authority may decide not to notify the initial investigation authority of a violation which as a whole is to be considered a minor one.
- (3) A sentence to a person who violates a prohibition or obligation imposed under this Act which is reinforced by a penalty payment for the same deed may be waived. (407/2002)

Section 47

(Repealed by 664/1999)

Forfeiture

Section 48

(Repealed by 893/2001)

Chapter 8 **Miscellaneous provisions**

Charges

Section 49

- (1) A charge to the State shall be collected on meat inspections, the necessary examinations, control of a plant, as well as approval of plants and their own-check systems assigned to the State by virtue of this Act, unless otherwise provided by the legislation of the European Community. When required under the legislation of the European Community, a charge shall also be collected from plants for the control of contaminants. It may be provided by decree that a charge relating to the control of contaminants may be collected from the production farms or Reindeer Herding Co-operatives.
- (2) Unusually extensive advising concerning building plans may also be subject to charge.
- (3) The provisions of the Act on the Charge Criteria of the State (150/92) apply to the imposition of charges, unless otherwise provided in the legislation of the European Community. When necessary, the competent ministry issues further provisions required under the legislation of the European Community.

Section 50

- (1) A municipality shall collect a charge according to a rate approved by the municipality from an operator for performing the following tasks referred to in this Act:
 - 1) meat inspection and the related control;
 - 2) control of meat processing plants and coldstores for meat;
 - 3) inspection of a live animal other than meat inspection in a plant;
 - 4) approval of plants and their own-check systems and registration of fishing vessels;
 - 5) control of plants exporting foodstuffs of animal origin outside the European Economic Area or the European Community as far as the purchasing country requires unusually extensive control; as well as
 - 6) inspection of milk production farms.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1, the municipality must collect charges when and as required by the legislation of the European Community on other control and related inspections and examinations.
- (3) The charges referred to in subsection 1 above are established so that they do not exceed the costs of the performance, unless otherwise provided by the legislation of the European

Community. The competent ministry issues further provisions required by the legislation of the European Community on the charges referred to in subsections 1 and 2.

- (4) Charges referred to in subsections 1 and 2 above may be seized without a sentence or decision as provided in the Act on Collecting Taxes and Charges through Recovery Proceedings (367/61).

Section 51

- (1) When required by the legislation of the European Community, the plants must pay the costs due to inspections in a plant carried out by foreign inspectors based on the obligation concerned.
- (2) If an inspection of a live animal was carried out by a veterinarian who does not hold an office in the municipality or federation of municipalities, the party who requested the inspection remunerates the veterinarian for the inspection.

Disclosure of confidential information

Section 52

- (1) Notwithstanding the confidentiality provided in the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), information obtained in the control of the compliance with this Act or when carrying out a task related to the control on the financial position of a private person or corporation, business or professional secret, or circumstances of a private person may be disclosed:
 - 1) to a State and municipal authorities for carrying out tasks provided in this Act;
 - 2) to prosecuting, police and customs authorities for solving an offence;
 - 3) foreign bodies and inspectors required under the legislation of the European Community or other international commitment binding Finland. (664/1999)

Registers and notification

Section 53

- (1) The National Food Agency keeps a national register on all approved plants, registered fishing vessels and listed first destinations, as well as laboratories it has approved. The municipal control authority keeps a register on the plants subject to its control, fishing vessels and milk production farms it has registered, as well as first destinations it has listed. Information necessary for the control of this Act and provisions issued under it may be recorded in the registers.
- (2) When requested, the municipality is obliged to report any information on the control and charges it has collected to the National Food Agency and State Provincial Office. (1112/2000)

Central government transfers to local government

Section 54

- (1) Unless otherwise provided by law, the Act on Planning and Government Grants for Social Welfare and Health Care (733/1992) applies to activities organised by a municipality by virtue of this Act.

(2) (Repealed by 1121/1998)

Further provisions

Section 55

- (1) Having regard to the legislation of the European Community, the competent ministry issues further provisions on:
 - 1) food hygiene requirements concerning production farms, plants, fishing vessels, first destinations, and foodstuffs of animal origin and their handling, as well as their control and inspections;
 - 2) more detailed definition of plants as well as the approval, registration, and listing of plants, first destinations, fishing vessels, and milk production farms;
 - 3) own-checks as well as taking and examination of samples;
 - 4) meat inspection and handling of animals used for food production;
 - 5) marking, labelling, and documents;
 - 6) approval of laboratories; as well as
 - 7) when necessary, professional requirements for the control and inspection staff.
- (2) The competent ministry may also issue further provisions on the sale of foodstuffs of animal origin on the production farm and from the production farms as well as regional restrictions on the sale of foodstuffs of animal origin from small plants approved under special conditions.

Laboratories

Section 56

- (1) The competent ministry approves the national reference laboratories for examinations of foodstuffs of animal origin and defines their tasks.
- (2) The National Food Agency approves the laboratories which are authorised to carry out tasks set out in this Act or under it. However, the municipal control authority controlling the plant or State veterinary officer carrying out meat inspection approves laboratories which may carry out other examinations required by the control authority relating to the own-checks in connection with the approval of the own-check system. (1112/2000)

Executive assistance

Section 57

- (1) When requested, the police and customs are obliged to provide executive assistance to the control authority specified in this Act in carrying out tasks laid down in this Act and provisions issued under it.

Notification obligation of a veterinarian

Section 58

- (1) A veterinarian who in connection with a visit to a production farm observes that the health of animals on the farm is such that it weakens the hygienic quality of the foodstuffs obtained from the animals concerned in an essential way shall notify this to the owner or keeper of the animal as well as to the competent veterinarian of the municipality or federation of municipalities

referred to in section 12(1) who is responsible for the control and inspections provided in this Act.

Further provisions

Section 59

- (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, it may be provided by decree that:
- 1) the State Provincial Office approves slaughterhouses and places of slaughter for reindeer as well as organises meat inspection provided in this Act;
 - 2) a charge on reindeer meat inspection as well as control of slaughterhouses and places of slaughter for reindeer is collected from the operator who requested the meat inspection;
 - 3) a municipality sees to the approval and control of plants adjacent to slaughterhouses and places of slaughter for reindeer; and
 - 4) a municipality approves the slaughterhouses for wild game and organises the meat inspection and control in these when the slaughtering is not carried out in a slaughterhouse approved by the National Veterinary and Food Research Institute.

Section 60

- (1) When necessary, further provisions on the implementation of this Act may be issued by decree.
- (2) It may also be provided by decree that the competent ministry may issue further provisions on the application of the decree referred to in subsection 1.

Other international agreements

Section 61

- (1) The provisions of this Act concerning the legislation of the European Community also apply to other international agreement binding Finland when so required by the agreement concerned.

Chapter 9

Transitional provisions and entry into force

Section 62

- (1) This Act enters into force on 1 January 1997. However, section 12(1) enters into force on 1 January 1998.
- (2) This Act repeals the following acts, as amended:
 - 1) the Fish Hygiene Act of 6 May 1994 (330/94);
 - 2) the Meat Hygiene Act of 28 June 1994 (511/94);
 - 3) the Act on the Hygiene of Egg Products of 28 June 1994 (517/94); as well as
 - 4) the Milk hygiene Act of 15 July 1994 (671/94).
- (3) Measures necessary for the implementation of this Act may be undertaken before the Act's entry into force.

Section 63

- (1) However, the decrees and decisions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry issued by virtue of the Fish Hygiene Act, Meat Hygiene Act, Act on the Hygiene of Egg Products as well as Milk Hygiene Act remain in force until otherwise provided by statute.

Section 64

- (1) Matters which are pending upon the entry into force of this Act shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions which were in force upon the entry into force of this Act.
- (2) Plants approved under the repealed acts continue their operations as plants pursuant to this Act. Foodstuff facilities referred to in the Act on Health Protection which under a decree referred to in section 4 are included in the scope of application of this Act and which were operating before the entry into force of this Act need not apply for a separate approval under this Act. A municipality confirms that the foodstuff facilities are plants referred to in this Act after ensuring that they meet the requirements laid down in this Act and provisions issued under it.
- (3) Plant which are in operation upon the entry into force of this Act must be rendered compatible with this Act and provisions issued under it within the period from the entry into force of this Act to be provided by decree.

Helsinki, 20 December 1996