Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1495 of 23 August 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 as regards Campylobacter in broiler carcases (Text with EEA relevance)

COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2017/1495

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amending Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 as regards *Campylobacter* in broiler carcases

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs[(1)], and in particular Article 4(4) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005[(2)] lays down the microbiological criteria for certain micro-organisms and the implementing rules to be complied with by food business operators in respect of the general and specific hygiene requirements referred to in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004.

(2) In particular, Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 lays down process hygiene criteria which set indicative contamination values above which corrective actions are required in order to maintain the hygiene of the process in compliance with food law.

(3) The 'European Union summary report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2015'[(3)] published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) states that human campylobacteriosis is the most reported human food-borne illness in the Union with around 230 000 cases reported annually.

(4) In 2010 the EFSA published the analysis of the baseline survey on the prevalence of *Campylobacter* in broiler batches and carcases[(4)]. The baseline survey was carried out at slaughterhouse level in 2008 to obtain comparable figures on the prevalence and the level of contamination of broilers in the Union. EFSA concluded that broiler carcases were contaminated at an average of 75,8 % with significant variations between Member States and slaughterhouses.

(5) According to the EFSA Scientific Opinion on the risk of human campylobacteriosis linked to broiler meat[(5)], published in 2010, it is likely that handling, preparation and consumption of broiler meat accounts for 20 % to 30 % of human cases of campylobacteriosis, while 50 % to 80 % can be attributed to the chicken reservoir as a whole.

(6) The EFSA Scientific Opinion on control options for *Campylobacter* along the poultry meat production chain, published in 2011[(6)], suggests a number of control options both at farm and at slaughterhouse level and estimates their impacts on the reduction of the number of human cases, including the introduction of a process hygiene criterion for *Campylobacter*. The EFSA estimates that a public health risk reduction from the consumption of broiler meat of more than 50 % could be achieved if carcases complied with a limit of 1 000 cfu/g and highlights that significant different contamination levels exist between neck skin and breast skin samples.

(7) The EFSA also published in 2012 a Scientific Opinion on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of poultry meat, which identifies *Campylobacter* as of high public health relevance[(7)], and recommends the adaptation of the current inspection methods of poultry carcases to address *Campylobacter*. In particular the EFSA suggests introducing a process hygiene criterion for *Campylobacter* on broiler carcases.

(8) Based on the EFSA opinions of 2010 and 2011, the Commission commissioned an analysis of the costs and benefits of setting certain control measures for reduction of Campylobacter in broiler meat at different stages of the food chain[(8)]. The main conclusion of this cost-benefit analysis is that setting a process hygiene criterion to *Campylobacter* in broiler carcases would provide one of the best balances between reducing human campylobacteriosis attributed to the consumption of poultry meat and economic consequences from the application of the criterion.

(9) The process hygiene criterion for *Campylobacter* in broiler carcases aims at keeping under control contamination of carcases during the slaughtering process. In addition in order to ensure a whole chain approach as recommended by the EFSA opinion on control options for *Campylobacter*, control measures should also be considered at farm level.

(10) Control of *Campylobacter* continues to prove challenging, as vertical transmission does not appear to be an important risk factor and all depends on how effective the biosecurity measures are at excluding *Campylobacter* from the broilers. A step by step approach should therefore be considered, making the process hygiene criteria gradually stricter over time. Nevertheless to maintain the same level of protection in Member States where such level of protection has been already achieved, Article 5(5) of Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 provides sufficient flexibility to apply a stricter process hygiene criterion, as this alternative criterion provides for at least equivalent guarantees as the reference criterion set in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005.

(11) In order to reduce the administrative burden for food business operators, the sampling plan for the criterion on *Campylobacter* should follow the same testing approach as for the process hygiene criterion set for *Salmonella* in poultry carcases. The same neck skin samples used for testing compliance with the process hygiene criterion set for *Salmonella* in poultry carcases may therefore be used for the *Campylobacter* analyses.

(12) The international standard EN ISO 10272-2 is the horizontal method for the enumeration of *Campylobacter* in food and feed stuffs. It should therefore be laid down

as a reference method for verifying compliance with the criterion for *Campylobacter* in poultry carcases.

(13) It is appropriate to defer the date of application of this Regulation in order to give sufficient time for food business operators to adapt their current practices to the new requirements and to allow laboratories performing *Campylobacter* analyses to implement the new test methods laid down in this Regulation.

(14) Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 should therefore be amended accordingly.

(15) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 is amended in accordance with the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2018.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 23 August 2017.

For the Commission

The President

Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1495. (See end of Document for details)*

ANNEX

Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 is amended as follows:

(1) in Chapter 2, Section 2.1 is amended as follows:

(a) the table is amended as follows:

(i) the following row 2.1.9 is added:

Food category	Micro-organisms	Sampling plan		Limits		Analytical reference method	Stage where the criterion applies	Action in case of unsatisfactory results
		n	c	m	M			
‘2.1.9 Carcasses of broilers	*Campylobacter* spp.	50 (1)	c = 20 From 1.1.2020 c = 15; From 1.1.2025 c = 10	1 000 cfu/g		EN ISO 10272-2	Carcasses after chilling	Improvements in slaughter hygiene, review of process controls, of animals' origin and of the biosecurity measures in the farms of origin’

(ii) footnote 2 is replaced by the following:

([2]) For points 2.1.3-2.1.5 and 2.1.9 m = M.;

(b) under the heading ‘Interpretation of the test results’, the following text is added:

Campylobacter spp. in poultry carcases of broilers:

— satisfactory, if a maximum of c/n values are > m,

— unsatisfactory, if more than c/n values are > m.;

(2) in Chapter 3, Section 3.2 is replaced by the following:

3.2. *Bacteriological sampling in slaughterhouses and at premises producing minced meat, meat preparations, mechanically separated meat and fresh meat*

Sampling rules for carcases of cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and horses