

Review

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Review

Poultry Meat Safety from the Point of View of European and Slovak Legislation

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Abstract: Poultry farming in Slovakia has a tradition and an irreplaceable position to ensure rational nutrition for the population. In terms of a nutritional value, poultrymeat (*Galliformes*) contains a high amount of proteins, essential amino acids, essential unsaturated fatty acids, minerals, vitamins and a low fat content. Poultrymeat production has a relatively short reproductive cycle and thus allows regulating the demand and supply. The poultry market also influences the development of domestic consumption. According to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, the consumption of meat has witnessed a persistent increase over the last 10 years. [1] According to the 2023 AVEC (The Voice of European Meat Sector) annual report, the consumption of poultrymeat in Slovakia was 20.0 kg per person per year. The average consumption in the EU-27 (2021) was 23.4 kg, with the countries with the highest consumption being Portugal (37.8 kg), Ireland (36.0 kg), Hungary (33.5 kg) and Spain (29.9 kg). On the other hand, the countries with the lowest consumption of poultrymeat, apart from Slovakia, also include Austria and Greece with a consumption of 21.5, resp. 21.0 kg [2]. The breeding of broiler chickens, as well as the production and placing on the market of poultrymeat must comply with the requirements laid down by legislation, while the compliance is regularly checked by the competent authorities.

Keywords: poultrymeat; from farm to table; legislation

1. Introduction

Assuring that the EU has the highest standards of food safety is a key policy priority for the Commission. The White Paper on Food safety reflects this priority. A radical new approach was proposed. This white paper makes proposals that transform EU food policy into a proactive, dynamic, coherent and comprehensive instrument to ensure a high level of human health and consumer protection.

The guiding principle throughout the white paper is that food safety policy must be based on a comprehensive, integrated approach. This means throughout the food chain („from to farm to table“); across all food sectors; between the Member States; at the EU external frontier and within the EU; in international and EU decision-making fora, and at all stages of the policy-making cycle (Figure 1).

In this way, the farm to table policy covering all sectors of the food chain, including feed production, primary production, food processing, storage, transport and retail sale, will be implemented systematically and in a consistent manner. This process is driven by the need to guarantee a high level of food safety [3].

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 [4] of the European Parliament and of the Council defines poultrymeat as poultrymeat suitable for human consumption, which has not undergone any treatment other than cold treatment.

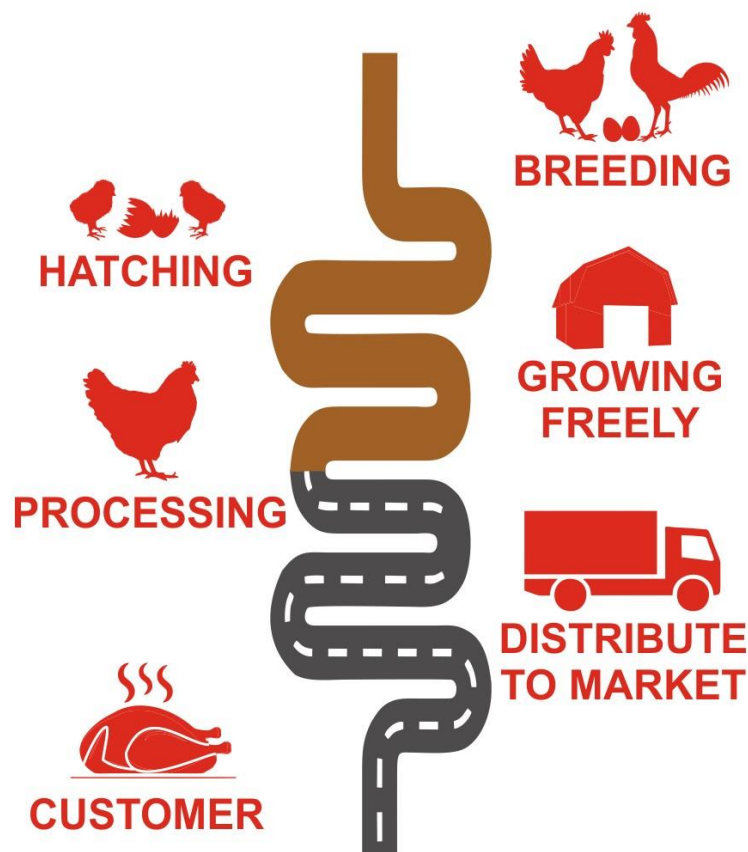


Figure 1. Poultry meat production scheme based on the farm-to-table principle.

The efficiency of the poultrymeat production is influenced not only by the appropriately chosen breeding technology and high-quality nutrition but also by the used breeds, compliance with the requirements for optimal microclimatic conditions for poultry and, above all, good health. Broiler chickens represent the largest share in the poultrymeat production. The manner in which poultry is handled before the slaughter affects the welfare of the animals and thus the quality of poultrymeat. If death, abrasions, broken bones, torn skin, metabolic exhaustion, dehydration, agitation, thermal stress are detected during the ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection, such conditions may result in the animal welfare being assessed as not respected.

In order to ensure food safety, it is essential to consider all aspects of the production, from the primary production up to the delivery of food to consumers, as each element can have a potential impact on food safety. The competent authorities of the Member States carry out official inspections of products of animal origin intended for human consumption with the aim of verifying compliance with the requirements established by legislation.

2. Poultry Farming

The term 'poultry' is defined in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 [5] of the European Parliament and of the Council as birds reared on farms, including birds which are not considered as domestic but which are kept as domestic animals, excluding ratites.

„Poultry“ means farmed birds, including birds that are not considered as domestic but which are farmed as domestic animals, with the exception of ratites.

Pursuant to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 39/2007 Coll. on Veterinary Care [6], the establishments intended for the production of commercial poultry must be approved by the competent national authority in the veterinary field (respective district veterinary

and food administrations). Following the issuance of the final decision on the approval, the approved establishment is assigned an official identification number by the State Veterinary and Food Administration.

It is in the interest of the consumer protection that the breeding method meets the precisely defined criteria regarding the breeding conditions. Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 [7] stipulates that in order to indicate types of farming with the exception of organic or biological farming.

Regulation (EU) 2018/848 [8] of the European Parliament and of the Council lays down the principles of organic farming and rules concerning organic farming, the related certification and the use of indications referring to organic farming in labelling and advertising, as well as rules on controls additional to those laid down in Regulation (EU) 2017/625 [9] of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 282/2020 Coll. [10] establishes certain rules of organic agricultural production pursuant to special regulations (Regulation (EU) No 2017/625 [9] of the European Parliament and of the Council; Regulation (EU) No 2018/848 [8] of the European Parliament and of the Council), the competence of state administration bodies in the field of organic agricultural production, the rights and obligations of persons carrying out organic agricultural production, the keeping of a register of operators of organic agricultural production, the powers and obligations of inspection organisations, the labelling of products of organic agricultural production, and misdemeanours and other administrative offences in the field of organic agricultural production.

2.1. Protection of Chickens Kept for Meat Production

Consideration of animal welfare requirements is required by the Protocol on the Protection and Welfare of Animals annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 39/2007 Coll. on Veterinary Care establishes in Section 22 (Animal Protection) the obligation of owners or breeders of animals to ensure their protection and welfare [6].

Council Directive 2007/43/EC [11] lays down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production. Every building where a flock of chickens are kept must meet the requirements for drinkers, feeding, bedding, ventilation and heating, noise, lighting, inspection, cleaning and record keeping. The Directive prohibits the performance of any surgical interventions carried out for reasons other than therapeutic or diagnostic purposes which cause damage to or the loss of a sensitive part of the body or the alteration of bone structure. Beak trimming may be authorised by the Member States when other measures to prevent feather pecking and cannibalism are exhausted. In such cases, it may be carried out only after consultation with and on the recommendation of a veterinarian and by qualified personnel on chicks less than 10 days old. In addition, Member States may also allow the castration of cockerels. The castration can only be performed under veterinary supervision by employees who have completed specific professional training. The directive establishes three ranges of stocking density. The general rule is that the density of the breeding area should not exceed 33 kg per m². Annex II to Council Directive 2007/43/EC establishes the requirements for the use of a higher density. The stocking density can be increased to 39 kg per m² if the building is equipped with ventilation and heating systems operated in such a way that the concentration of ammonia (NH₃) does not exceed the level of 20 ppm and the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) does not exceed the level of 3,000 ppm when measured at the level of the chickens' heads. In the case of an outside temperature measured in the shade exceeding 30 °C, the inside temperature must not exceed the indicated inside temperature by more than 3 °C. The average relative humidity measured inside the breeding building during 48 hours cannot exceed 70% if the outside temperature drops below 10 °C [11].

A further increase above 39 kg/m², up to 42 kg/m², is allowed if records of low mortality rates and good management practices are confirmed by authorities in addition to meeting the monitoring conditions already mentioned. For these highest stocking densities, an indicator of the cumulative daily mortality rate is calculated by using the prescribed equation, which indicator must not be exceeded.

At the national level, the minimum rules for the protection of chickens reared for meat production are laid down in Slovak Government Regulation No 275/2010 Coll. [12].

2.2. Health Control

The harmonized principles of the animal health strategy, including the "one health" concept, and rules for the prevention and control of animal diseases that can be transmitted to animals or to humans are laid down in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 [13].

Pursuant to Section 37 of Act No. 39/2007 Coll. on Veterinary Care [6], natural and legal persons authorised to dispose of animals are obliged to report to the veterinary administration without any delay any suspicion of the presence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents (invasive salmonellae) or a laboratory confirmation of their presence in the bred animals and allow the examination of the animals. In the event of a violation of this provision, the owner or keeper is guilty of an offence under Section 48 and of another administrative offence under Section 50 of the Act.

Movements of poultry is subject to the veterinary control and must be carried out in accordance with Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards animal health requirements for the movement of terrestrial animals and hatching eggs within the Union [14]. Operators, including transporters, must ensure that the containers in which productive poultry are transported in means of transport bear the approval or registration number of the establishment of origin.

Operators may only move poultry intended for slaughter to another Member State if the animals have been continuously resident in a registered or approved poultry holding establishment since hatching or for at least 21 days prior to departure and come from flocks which do not show any clinical signs of, or raise any suspicion of, any of the diseases on the list of diseases relevant to the species concerned.

The purpose of the Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the control of salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents [15] is to ensure that proper and effective measures are taken to detect and control salmonella and other zoonotic agents at all relevant stages of production, processing and distribution, particularly at the level of primary production, including in feed, in order to reduce their prevalence and the risk they pose to public health. Salmonella monitoring in broiler flocks, in accordance with the national control programme for salmonella infections in flocks of domestic fowl (*Gallus Gallus*), applies to all commercial broiler flocks in the Slovak Republic. In the case that official sampling is conducted, and whenever deemed appropriate, the respective district veterinary and food administration must also ensure that the use of antimicrobials is checked to ensure that the results of Salmonella testing are not affected by the use of these substances.

3. Transport of Live Poultry to Slaughterhouses

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn. During transport of poultry, animal welfare problems are posed by handling, mixing different social groups, interruption of feeding and watering, car movements (acceleration, vibration), fatigue, noise, new environments (confinement) and temperature changes. Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 stipulates in Annex III that animals must be handled gently, without causing disturbance during collection and transport [5]. Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations lays down the requirements to be complied with by food business operators transporting live animals to slaughterhouses [16]. The means of transport and containers must be constructed and operated in such a way as to protect the animals from adverse weather conditions. Annex I to the Regulation lays down the minimum floor area for the transport of poultry in containers.

According to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 39/2007 Coll. [6], the owner or keeper of an animal is obliged, when breeding or keeping an animal, to ensure its protection and well-being, which is understood to mean the achievement of such a relationship between the

environment and each individual animal, while taking into account the type of animal and the degree of its development, adaptation and domestication, which ensures its good health, physiological needs and ethological needs, sufficient freedom of movement, social relations, the development of its characteristics and physiological and behavioural manifestations, including, inter alia, by observing the requirements for the transport of animals.

3. Ante Mortem and Post Mortem Inspection

Pursuant to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2019/627 [17], all animals must be subjected to an ante mortem inspection prior to slaughter. However, the inspection may be limited to a representative sample of birds from each flock, and immediately after the slaughter the carcasses and associated by-products are subjected to a post mortem inspection.

Ante mortem and post mortem inspections are essential for the protection of human health, animal health and animal welfare and therefore remain the responsibility of the official veterinarian. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/624 lays down the criteria and conditions for determining when an ante mortem inspection may be carried out in the holding of origin. For animals suitable for slaughter, an animal health certificate is issued, as defined in Annex IV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/628 [18]. The animal health certificate must accompany the animals to the slaughterhouse or be sent in whatever format in advance, and any findings relevant to the subsequent inspection of the meat must be recorded in the animal health certificate. Where the ante mortem inspection is carried out in the holding of origin in accordance with Article 5 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/624, the official veterinarian at the slaughterhouse only carries out the ante mortem inspection in the specified case and to the specified extent [18].

Slaughterhouse operators are not allowed to admit animals to the premises of their slaughterhouse unless they have requested and obtained the relevant food chain information contained in the records kept pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the holding of origin [19]. Such information must be provided to slaughterhouse operators no later than 24 hours before the animals arrive at the slaughterhouse, except in the circumstances provided for in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 [5]. The requirements for ante mortem inspections at slaughterhouses and post mortem inspections are laid down in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627 laying down uniform practical arrangements for the performance of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption [17] in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625 [9].

The health mark defined in Article 3(51) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 certifies that the meat is fit for human consumption. Food business operators must not place on the market a product of animal origin handled in an establishment which is subject to the approval pursuant to Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 unless it bears either a health mark or an identification mark applied in accordance with Section I of Annex II to that Regulation, unless the Regulation specifies a requirement for the use of a health mark [9]. Food business operators may only apply an identification mark to a product of animal origin if the product has been produced in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 in an establishment complying with the requirements of that Regulation. The official veterinarian supervises the health marking and the marks used [5].

Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishes a high level of protection of public health as one of the main objectives of food law [20]. Food must not be placed on the market if it is unsafe. Microbiological hazards in food (raw and undercooked poultrymeat products) are a major source of foodborne illnesses in humans and pose a high risk to public health.

Campylobacter spp. and *Salmonella* spp. have been identified as the main human health hazards subject to poultrymeat inspections. The competent authorities conduct official controls and verify that food business operators correctly implement the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 as regards microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, targeting the presence of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* [21].

4. Technology of Poultry Slaughtering and Dressing

Poultry slaughterhouses are establishments used for slaughtering and dressing poultry, the meat of which is intended for human consumption. Poultrymeat can be marketed fresh, frozen or quick-frozen. Food business operators must ensure that the construction, layout and equipment of slaughterhouses where poultry is slaughtered meet the general requirements set out by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council. Poultry slaughterhouses must have a sufficient number of rooms, appropriate to the operations being carried out [5].

Operators are obliged at all stages of production, processing and distribution, including internet sales, to comply with the requirements laid down by Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 152/1995 Coll. on Foodstuffs [22] and special regulations (e.g. Regulation (EC) No 178/2002). Food business operators may only place products of animal origin on the market if they have been produced, prepared and handled in establishments which comply with the relevant requirements under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council and have been approved or conditionally approved [5].

Food business operators operating slaughterhouses in which poultry are slaughtered must ensure that stunning, bleeding, plucking, evisceration and other dressing is carried out without undue delay in a way that avoids contamination of the meat. Separation in space or time of the following operations is required (Regulation No 853/2004): stunning and bleeding, plucking and any scalding and dispatching meat [5].

4.1. Stunning and Bleeding

During killing and related operations, animals must be spared any avoidable pain, fear or suffering (Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009) [23]. Business operators must ensure that persons responsible for stunning, or other designated personnel, carry out regular checks to ensure that animals do not show any signs of consciousness or sensitivity between the end of the stunning process and death. Such checks are carried out on a sufficiently representative sample of animals and their frequency is determined while taking into account the results of previous checks, as well as all factors which may affect the effectiveness of the stunning process. If the result of the inspection shows that the animal is not properly stunned, the person responsible for stunning must immediately take appropriate measures defined in standard operating procedures. Business operators must ensure that only persons holding a certificate of qualification for such operations, demonstrating their competence to perform them in accordance with the provisions of this regulation, perform the stunning of animals and exsanguination of live animals. According to available literature sources, among the methods used for stunning poultry, the low atmospheric pressure stunning (LAPS) is considered a humane method that improves the welfare of poultry by gradually inducing unconsciousness, without fear, eliminating hanging alive and ensuring adequate stunning of all poultry for bleeding [24].

In the Slovak Republic, a natural person or a legal person (entrepreneur) must complete an accredited educational program and take a final exam to be awarded the qualification for conducting the operations related to the killing of animals (Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 432/2012 Coll.) [25]. The educational program consists of three modules (A, B and C), each lasting ten lessons, while the B Module is for poultry. Pursuant to the Regulation, a registered church or religious society which performs the ritual slaughter of animals for its need to satisfy certain traditional religious rituals may only perform the slaughter with the permission of the chief veterinarian, subject to compliance with the general requirements (animals must be spared any unnecessary irritation, pain or suffering during transfer, housing, immobilisation, stunning, killing or euthanasia).

4.2. Scalding, Plucking, Evisceration and Other Dressing

In accordance with the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EC) No 853/2004, plucking, evisceration and other dressing must be carried out without undue delay and in

such a way as to prevent the meat contamination. In particular, measures must be taken to prevent the contents of the digestive tract from spilling out during evisceration [5].

4.3. Chilling and Freezing

After the post-mortem inspection and evisceration, slaughtered animals must be cleaned and chilled to a temperature not higher than 4 °C as soon as possible, unless the meat is cut while warm.

According to Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008, the information that can be indicated on labels includes, among others, the information on the chilling method. The Regulation also stipulates that manufacturers must monitor water absorption in individual chilling methods [7].

Meat intended for freezing must be frozen without undue delay in accordance with Regulation of the European Parliament and Council (EC) No 853/2004 [5].

5. Cutting and Boning

Food business operators must ensure that the cutting and boning of poultrymeat is carried out in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council [5]. The handling of meat must be organised in such a way that contamination is avoided or minimised. For those reasons, food business operators must in particular ensure that meat intended for cutting is brought into the workrooms progressively as needed; during cutting, boning, trimming, slicing or dicing, wrapping and packaging, the temperature of the meat is maintained at a temperature of not more than 4 °C by means of an ambient temperature of 12 °C or an alternative system having an equivalent effect; and precautions have been taken to prevent cross-contamination, where necessary, by separating operations with different animal species by time or space, if the premises are approved for cutting meat from animals of different animal species. However, meat may be boned and cut before reaching a temperature of not more than + 4 °C if the cutting room is in the same location as the slaughter premises, provided that the meat is moved to the cutting room either directly from the slaughterhouse premises or after a waiting period in the cooling or refrigeration room. As soon as the meat has been cut and, where appropriate, packaged, it must be cooled to a temperature of not more than 4 °C. The meat must attain a temperature of not more than 4 °C before transport and be maintained at that temperature during transport. However, if the competent authority so authorises, livers intended for the production of foie gras may be transported at a temperature above 4 °C, provided that such transport is carried out in accordance with the requirements laid down by the competent authority for transport from one establishment to another and that the meat leaves the slaughterhouse or cutting plant immediately and the transport takes no more than two hours.

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, food business operators operating establishments producing minced meat, meat preparations or mechanically separated meat must ensure that they are constructed so as to avoid contamination of meat and meat products, in particular by allowing constant progress of the operations or by ensuring separation between the different production batches [5]. The calcium content of mechanically separated meat is to be determined by standardised methods and must not exceed 0.1% (=100 mg/100g or 1,000 ppm) (Commission Regulation (EC) No 2074/2005) [26].

At the national level, in accordance with Decree No 83/2016 Coll. of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, mechanically separated poultrymeat may only be used for the production of a soft meat product, a cooked meat product, a roasted meat product, a semi-canned meat product, a canned meat product in a quantity of not more than 70 % by weight of the meat emulsion. In mechanically separated meat, the proportion of bone particles expressed as a calcium content may not exceed 1.8 g/kg, the size of bone particles in the case of separated poultrymeat may not exceed 1.3 mm, and the maximum permissible amount of bone particles is 1.5 % by weight [27].

6. Packaging and Labeling

Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 stipulates that in order to indicate types of farming with the exception of organic or biological farming, only the terms (and only if the relevant conditions laid down in Annex V to that Regulation are met) “Fed with ... % ...”; “Extensive indoor” (“Barn – reared”); “Free-range”; “Traditional free range” and “Free range – total freedom” [7].

The information that may appear on the labels includes the information on the method of chilling the type of farming. In the interest of consumer protection, the farming method must comply with precisely defined criteria concerning the farming conditions and thresholds for certain criteria, such as the age of the animals at slaughter, the length of the fattening period and the dosage of certain food ingredients (Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008) [7].

Whoever manufactures, handles or places food on the market is obliged to label it in the codified form of the national language with the information required by Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council [28]. The food information is the responsibility of the food business operator under whose name or business name the food is placed on the market or, if that food business operator is not established in the Union, of the importer on the Union market. Foods which are perishable from a microbiological point of view and may therefore present an immediate danger to human health after a short period of time must be labelled with the “use by” date. After the expiry date, the food is considered unsafe in accordance with Article 14(2) to (5) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council. For poultrymeat (fresh, chilled or frozen), the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance is mandatory [20].

7. Storage, Transport and Placing on the Market

In the interest of support and protection of human health and consumer protection on the food market, food business operators who store, transport and place food on the market are obliged, pursuant to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 152/1995 Coll. on Foodstuffs [22] and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on food hygiene, to ensure that the above activities are carried out in such premises and under such conditions as to preserve the safety, quality and a biological value of the food and to keep perishable food permanently chilled, and frozen food permanently frozen (chilled poultry – max. +4 °C; frozen poultry – max. -12 °C; deep-frozen poultry – max. -18 °C) [5].

Foodstuffs must be transported in vehicles fit for the purpose and suitably equipped, in such a way as to preserve their safety and quality, and under such conditions that the temperature of the foodstuffs does not change in such a way as to adversely affect the safety and quality of the foodstuffs. The verification that a vehicle meets the defined requirements is carried out by an accredited laboratory (TSU – Technical Testing Institute Piešťany) by testing its insulating properties and cooling capacity in accordance with Decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs No 61/1983 Coll. The fact that the vehicle meets the requirements is certified by a test report (ATP CERTIFICATE) and indicated on a label which must be permanently affixed to the vehicle in a clearly visible place [29].

Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, exposed meat must be stored and transported separately from packaged meat, unless stored or transported at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage or transport cannot be a source of contamination for the meat [5].

In accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 152/1995 [22], whoever sells food, including internet selling, is responsible for the safety and quality of the food sold, is obliged, among other things, to ensure the hygiene of sale in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, and is obliged to store food and raw materials at the temperatures declared by the operator of the food business [19].

8. Direct Sale and Supply of Small Quantities of Poultrymeat to Final Consumers and Other Retail Establishments

A primary producer who produces less than 10,000 poultry animals for human consumption per year on a farm or in a holding and is specifically registered with the respective district veterinary and food administration may, in accordance with Government Regulation No 360/2011 Coll., sell poultrymeat in its own premises or at a local market place directly to final consumers or supply a local retail establishment that supplies final consumers directly [30]. Primary producers are not allowed to at the primary production stage carry out operations which substantially alter the anatomical integrity or nature of the poultrymeat, they must store and transport poultrymeat at an appropriate temperature, and, in particular, they must ensure that during storage, transport and handling it is protected from contamination, spoilage, decomposition, pollution, sunlight or other sources of heat, waste water or other harmful substances or influences which adversely affect its hygiene and safety.

In order to ensure the traceability of poultrymeat, the label or tag attached to each carcase or viscera must bear easily legible information on the origin of the meat and a clearly visible and legible warning to purchasers: 'Poultrymeat has not been subjected to veterinary inspection. It is intended for consumption in the home of the final consumer after thermal treatment [309].

9. Official Controls

Harmonised rules have been laid down at the European Union level to ensure that food is safe and of good quality. Regulation (EU) 2017/625 lays down rules for the performance of official controls and other official activities by the competent authorities of the Member States [9].

The state administration authorities referred to in paragraphs 1 (b) and (c) of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 39/2007 Coll. on Veterinary Care carry out official controls of compliance with the veterinary requirements under this Act and under special regulations for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements of food law applicable to animals intended for food production, to products of animal origin and to food of animal origin at all stages of production, processing and distribution of animals, hatching eggs, embryonic products, animal by-products and products of animal origin covered by special rules, on export and other exit from the European Union, on placing on the market in the European Union and on entry into the European Union, at all stages of the production, processing, distribution and use of feeding stuffs as defined by this Act and by special rules, traceability and labelling requirements and animal protection [6].

The authorities of the State Veterinary and Food Administration referred to in Article 21(1)(c) and (d) of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 152/1995 Coll. carry out official control of the production, handling and placing on the market of food of animal origin [22].

10. Conclusions

Poultry has the best ability to convert nutrients into meat, which is why broiler chicken farming is one of the most intensively developing sectors of livestock production. Minimum rules for the protection of chickens reared for meat production must already be in place and respected during rearing. Food law lays down the health safety requirements for poultrymeat which food business operators must comply with when producing and placing poultrymeat from farms on the table.

Official controls carried out by the competent authorities of the Member States are intended to verify compliance with the Union food safety legislation at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

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