

# IPIFF position on the revision of EU food hygiene legislation and import rules for insects as food

## General Remarks

While insects and their products have the potential to become a major source of protein for human consumption in Europe, their producers **primarily rely on a ‘solid’ and ‘predictable’ regulatory framework** to plan their investment & marketing activities throughout the continent.

As EU umbrella organisation for the insect production sector, IPIFF **welcomes the establishment of harmonized rules** to spell out hygiene requirements and EU import conditions for food insect products.

The recent adoption of [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2283](#) on ‘novel foods’ already constituted an important milestone, by clarifying the legal status of insect food products and establishing harmonized and simplified rules for their marketing within the EU<sup>1</sup>. We trust that the forthcoming update of the EU food hygiene legislation (i.e. Regulation No 853/2004) and the establishment of import rules **will lead to fill the remaining ‘regulatory loopholes’** surrounding the production and marketing of insects as food within the European Union.

In this document, we aim to convey our views on both abovementioned policy initiatives, and we propose concrete recommendations - see frames - to improve the current draft texts (import conditions) as proposed by the European Commission:

- chapter 1 outlines our contribution regarding the forthcoming revision of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004;
- chapter 2 sums up our views and recommendations on import conditions for insects as food.

Generally speaking, we consider that European Commission plans and proposals **constitute a good basis** to ensure that all insect producers **adhere to ‘appropriate safety standards’** and can be placed on a **level playing field**.

On the other hand, we believe that **certain improvements** can be made on the proposals (i.e. proposals on import conditions), notably to ensure a **better consistency with other relevant legislations applying to the insect sector** (e.g. EU novel food legislation, EU legislation applying to insects in animal feed).

Finally, IPIFF and its members **are willing to collaborate with the European Commission**, notably to discuss on the implementation of these new rules and to ensure that these new requirements can be **realistically enforced by operators**.

---

<sup>1</sup> For further information see ‘IPIFF position paper - implementation of EU Regulation 2015/2283 on ‘novels foods ‘(26 November 2016). Document available on the [IPIFF website](#)

## IPIFF contribution to the revision of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 for insect products

### General comments

The European Commission envisions to amend [Regulation \(EU\) No 853/2004<sup>2</sup>](#) laying down specific hygiene rules for products of animal origin, in order to address the specificities of insect processing activities (e.g. killing and further processing of insects) while aligning their ‘obligations’ with those of other animal products producers.

Similarly, European Insect processors must **today already conform with the general ‘food safety objectives’ and ‘hygiene requirements’** foreseen in the ‘General EU Food Law’ (Regulation 178/2002) as well as with Regulation 852/2004 and Regulation 853/2004 (e.g. compliance with traceability requirements, record keeping and compliance with HACCP based procedures).

We do however consider that **the setting of EU hygiene requirements targeting specifically insect production/processing as food would be helpful**, notably to support actors in the enforcement the general EU requirements and further harmonize the conditions of production between those actors in Europe.

### IPIFF agrees with creating a compulsory approval regime for insect producers that are active in processing activities

We understand that the European Commission intends to create a new section for insect production in annex III of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, which in concrete terms would mean that those operators would have to **be approved by their national competent authorities** (following an on-site visit) **prior starting their activities** (in accordance with article 4.2 of the abovementioned text).

Generally speaking, we **agree** with the above principle:

- By doing so, the EU legislator aligns the ‘regulatory status’ of insect producers to the regime applying for food business operators’ producing other products of animal origin (these are indeed covered by annex III of Regulation No 853/2004 and are therefore already subject to approval procedure;
- In practice, insect producers are being regularly controlled by their competent authorities and/or are being audited by third party officials - in the context of certification assurance systems those operators adhere to.

### IPIFF acknowledges that specific hygiene provisions or biosecurity measures covering insect processing activities as food would be useful

The IPIFF Members suggest to include the obligation for operators processing holometabolic insects (e.g. crickets, grasshoppers) to remove the wings and the legs of the animal when handling it.

Furthermore, IPIFF considers appropriate to **set specific microbiological limits** for insect products These could be established according to the following general principles:

- Differentiated limits should be set for insects as raw material (e.g. insect meal) and final products;
- Those limits and/or the selection of the microbiological parameters/bacteria being evaluated should be consistent and/or aligned with those applying for the same categories of products (e.g. crustaceans and molluscan shellfish)

On the other hand, we understand that **specific microbiological limits may be established in the framework of EU novel food authorisation covering insects** (based on the applicant proposal): i.e. [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/2470](#) establishing the Union list of novel foods. These limits will therefore only apply

---

<sup>2</sup> This Regulation lays down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

for the insect species considered and may not cover the final product for which the authorisation is being sought.

Therefore, besides the abovementioned specific limits, the IPIFF members recommend to set **common standards which insect operators would be advised to follow** when producing insect species intended for human consumption. In our view, these should at least cover *Listeria monocytogenes* (e.g. absence in 25g), *Salmonella* (e.g. absence in 25g), or enterobacteria.

The IPIFF Members are currently exploring options for recording specific limits in the context of the **draft IPIFF Guide on Good Hygiene Practices**: this document - whose publication is foreseen by early next year - aims to assist insect producers in the implementation EU food & feed safety legislation, while providing incentives to develop a robust food & feed safety management system.

Besides, most operators producing insects as food must comply with specific limits and/or standards as set up in the framework of **food and feed safety assurance systems established by national authorities or private organizations**.

However, we don't consider realistic to set up harmonized processing methods nor recommend critical control points. These are usually being established by insect producers in the framework of 'individual' HACCP programmes.

## IPIFF views on the proposed EU import conditions for insect products as food

### General comments

IPIFF **welcomes** the European Commission plans to **regulate the conditions for importing insect food products** into the EU. This reform will indeed contribute to fill the current 'regulatory loopholes' in the EC, and therefore contribute to bring further legal clarity for insect producers in third countries to plan their marketing activities into the European Union.

In our view, the regulatory proposals addressing 'import conditions for certain products of animal origin'<sup>345</sup> (later referred as 'the EU package') proposed by the EC (public consultation open on 9 October 2018) '**lay down solid foundations**'.

Yet, we do believe that these texts may **be improved or clarified**, notably to ensure that **import requirements are well aligned** with 'general' EU food standards, with the future specific hygiene standards for insects as food (i.e. section XVII of Reg 853/2004) and **other legislations applicable to insect producers** (e.g. EU 'novel food' legislation and EU legislation applying to insects as animal feed).

### IPIFF generally agrees with the proposed import conditions but suggests to introduce a couple of amendments to the draft text

IPIFF believes that the 'obligations imposed in this EU package **provide a good basis** to ensure that imported insects and their products **comply with the same or 'equivalent' standards** as those applying within the

---

<sup>3</sup> See 'Draft Commission delegated supplementing Regulation (EU) 2017/625 with regard to requirements to be respected by consignments of certain animals and goods intended for human consumption entering the Union'. Document available through the following [link](#).


<sup>4</sup> See 'Draft Commission implementing Regulation (EU) establishing lists of third countries or regions thereof authorized for the entry into the EU of certain animals and goods intended for human consumption and amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/759' Regulation available through the following [link](#) and its [annex](#)

<sup>5</sup> See 'Draft Commission implementing Regulation (EU) laying down model official certificates for certain animals and goods and amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/759 as regards model certificates' Document available through the following [link](#) as well as its [annex](#) .

EU. In our view, several additional must be included in the proposals so as to ensure that the above objective is met. To this end we have formulated the following recommendations.

IPIFF recommendations:

- IPIFF considers that the insect producing establishments in third countries should **be specifically approved by the national competent authorities in view exporting their products into the EU**. Such measure would indeed be consistent with the establishment of an EU approval system for EU based companies as envisioned by the EC (see above): in practice, the third country competent authorities must check that the requirements foreseen in Regulation No 853/2004 (the future section XVII - annex III for insects) are well enforced by the producer as a precondition for its approval.
- As a precondition for authorising a third country to export insects and their products, we call for the **country in question and its competent authority to be audited by the Health and food audits and analysis office in DG SANTE** (European Commission), in accordance with standard rules on import conditions for food products into the EU.
- Furthermore, IPIFF consider necessary to **clarify that the feeding of insects** (intended to be exported in to the EU) is limited to **substrates that are eligible as feed materials for farmed animals in the EU** (e.g. vegetal based materials and or milk, eggs and or their derived products), consistently with provisions existing for insects processed animal proteins used in animal feed (Regulation (EC) No 142/2011 chapter I section II).
- Consequently, **the model of certificate for insects** as introduced in the EU package (see [annex](#)) **should be complemented**, in order to include the above proposed amendments or clarifications (e.g. reference to the required approval of the activities by the third country competent authorities, introduction of a specific paragraph or a section in which the export/importer certifies that the insects were only feed with substrates authorised as feed materials in the EU (e.g. taking as model the certificate provided in annex XV, chapter 1a of Regulation (EC) No 142/2011 concerning insect PAPs in animal feed).

 **We are unclear whether dead insects and their products exported to the EU must originate from a ‘EU listed country’ and how the EU package articulate with the provisions of the EU ‘novel food’ legislation**

Article 20 of the draft Regulation establishing a list of third countries authorised for the entry into the EU (see [link](#)) provides that the products must *‘originate in and (be) consigned from a third country or region thereof and are authorised in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council and listed in the Union list of novel foods’*. We find the wording of this provision quite confusing.

IPIFF recommendations:

- The EC services should clarify **whether producers of dead insects and their products** are covered **by the ‘country listing requirement’** (see above), similarly to the obligation applying to live insects;
- The EC services should specify whether a **specific novel food authorisation is needed for third country products** or if those are exempted from the novel food notification or application obligation, provided that it complies with the conditions of use and specifications of a previously authorised application<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> See IPIFF briefing paper on the provisions relevant to the commercialization of insect-based products intended for human consumption (see chapter 4.6). document available on the [IPIFF website](#)