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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on the Transport  
of Perishable Foodstuffs  
(Fifty-eighth session,  
Geneva, 11-14 November 2002)

**NEW APPROACH TO VETERINARY INSPECTIONS OF CONTROLLED  
TEMPERATURE TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT**

**“TOTAL QUALITY OF THE TRANSPORT LINK IN THE COLD CHAIN”**

**Note by the secretariat**

The secretariat reproduces below a proposal submitted by France.

**1. Technical and regulatory framework**

In view of the progress observed in recent years in the construction of controlled temperature transport equipment (diversity of production, industrialization of production, ...) the competent authority in France (the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Rural Affairs) has revised the methods of the inspections it practises in implementing the *Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP)*.

This project, entitled **“Total quality of the transport link in the cold chain,”** prepared in consultation with transport professionals (constructors of refrigeration units, constructors and users of equipment), with the technical support of GIE CEMAFROID (the official testing station) and the decentralized services of the competent authority, has adopted a quality

management approach. It remains the responsibility of the competent authority which supervises the system (second level official inspections). In basing themselves on a *quality management* system regularly audited by GIE CEMAFROID, the professionals demonstrate their ability to ensure the compliance of the equipment produced with the requirements of the ATP Agreement.

Through the use of modern data management and transmission methods, the system now being put in place will bring about a simplification of administrative procedures and a more rapid issue of ATP certificates of compliance.

These provisions will contribute to an improvement in the overall quality of the controlled temperature transport equipment fleet and will permit the application of a monitoring pressure better adapted to the risks.

## **2. Mode of implementation of the new approach**

### **Audit of production of new equipment**

Where new equipment is concerned, GIE CEMAFROID audits the output of establishments applying for *technical certificates of compliance*. The companies concerned are those which provide for their customers new equipment for which application is made to the competent authority for a certificate of compliance with ATP, whether the equipment is manufactured or assembled in France or abroad.

The *production audits* of this equipment will apply both to the means employed by the company to ensure the quality of its output and to the characteristics of the equipment itself. The frequency of the audits depends on the company's volume of production.

On the basis of these audit reports, the technical commission of GIE CEMAFROID, which comprises representatives of professionals, of the competent authority and of GIE CEMAFROID itself, takes a decision on the company's capacity to market equipment complying with the requirements of the regulations.

*For the company*, the new method has the following *advantages*:

- the administrative file of the equipment is simplified;
- expert criteria are standardized;
- quality management acquisitions are taken into account;
- monitoring pressure is adapted to the risk;
- certificates are issued without delay (during the period of validity of the audit);
- the company can communicate on quality management.

### **Renewing certificates for equipment in service**

In order to *renew certificates at 6 and 9 years* for equipment in service, the owners concerned must demonstrate that the equipment is capable of maintaining the cold chain.

Two procedures permit this to be demonstrated:

- Either the equipment undergoes a test in an *official testing station*. If the test result is favourable, the certificate of compliance with ATP can be renewed for a period of six years;
- Or the equipment (independent or non-independent refrigeration equipment) undergoes a test in an *authorized test centre*. If the result is positive, the ATP certificate of compliance may be renewed for a period of three years.

The authorized test centres are companies specializing in transport refrigeration, whose technical competence and impartiality have been assessed by regular audits conducted by GIE CEMAFROID.

In all cases, the certificate of compliance with ATP can only be renewed for equipment which is 12 years old once such equipment has been passed by an official testing station.

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