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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.6.2025)

Food products from third countries, regardless of their origin, must comply with EU food safety standards laid down in EU legislation. According to Regulation (EU) 2017/625¹, Member States must carry out official controls and enforcement activities at all stages of distribution, including at the import stage.

Where food of non-animal origin from third countries poses a risk, the Commission adopts measures through Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793², including increased frequency checks at border control posts.

Member States are to impose penalties applicable to the infringement of the Union agri-food chain legislation. These penalties shall be effective, proportionate, dissuasive and the Member States' competent authorities are responsible for the removal of non-compliant consignments from the EU market.

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is established to ensure an exchange of information between Member States to support a swift reaction by food safety authorities.

The Commission performs audits³ in Member States and in third countries to ensure that their official control systems guarantee that goods intended for export to the EU comply with applicable EU rules. As suggested in the Vision for Food and Agriculture, a dedicated task force will be established, which will significantly increase the Union's response to further strengthening the control on imports.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>.

² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/1793/oj/eng.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit_reports/index.cfm.