

Organisation of Animal By-Product Handling

Follow-up audit on the performance of the recommendations made in the audit report of 2007

Report of the National Audit Office to the *Riigikogu*. Tallinn, 4 February 2011

Summary of audit results

The purpose of the follow-up audit was to investigate whether the recommendations made in the 2007 audit report 'Organisation of Animal By-Product Handling' have been carried out. The audit of 2007 took a look at the measures taken to guarantee appropriate elimination of animal by-products not intended for human consumption proceeding from Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002. Several omissions were found in the activities of agricultural producers as a result of the previous audit, because they had failed to handle some of the perished animals in special plants, and the state failed to keep account of and inspect such handling appropriately.

Animal by-products not intended for human consumption are a threat to the health of people and animals, because they may cause the spread of diseases or environmental pollution. Irrespective of how these by-products appear, this threat must be sufficiently managed and safe disposal of such by-products must be inspected.

The state has a working infrastructure for collection and handling of animal by-products of different categories and for performance of requirements for permitted use. Although some countries still have problems with the collection and appropriate handling of perished agricultural animals, the situation has improved in comparison to 2007.

However, the National Audit Office finds that performance of the requirements for elimination of handling waste and prevention of environmental pollution is still unresolved in the state-owned animal by-product handling company Loomsete Jäätmete Käitlemise Aktsiaselts. The situation here has not changed in comparison to the previous audit.

Main observations

- The follow-up audit indicated that the percentage of perished bovines who were not appropriately handled has creased by a half – from 12% in 2006 to 6% in 2009. However, not all category 1 animal by-products were appropriately handled in Põlvamaa and Hiiumaa. Every fifth (18%) perished bovine in Põlva County and every third (31%) perished bovine in Hiiumaa were not handled in 2009. The perishing of category two agricultural animals (pigs) has not been analysed in detail, which is why the actual extent to which they were handled cannot be evaluated.
- Loomsete Jäätmete Käitlemise AS, which organises the handling of animal by-products, has not been able to destroy handling waste – meat-and-bone meal – over a long period.

Handling waste piling up means that its subsequent destruction may prove to be extremely time-consuming and complicated.

- The company, which is located in a nitrate-sensitive area, poses a threat to surface and ground water, because the wastewater ejected from the company's water treatment plant contains hazardous substances at levels that exceed the permitted limits by many times.

The National Audit Office advises the Ministry of Agriculture as the representative of the owner to demand implementation of immediate measures by Loomsete Jäätmete Käitlemise AS for safe elimination of the meat-and-bone meal created during the plant's production processes and termination of the environmental pollution caused by the ineffective work of the water treatment plant.

Reply of the Minister of Agriculture:

The Minister of Agriculture promised to demand an action plan about elimination of processing waste and guaranteeing the performance of environmental requirements from Loomsete Jäätmete Käitlemise AS. The Minister also promised to make a proposal to the supervisory board of the company that could consider claiming the damages caused to the company by the design of the secondary treatment plant or construction errors from the guilty party.

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