



# GEORGOFILI WORLD

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## MARKETING RULES FOR ANIMAL PRODUCTS

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The opening to the international market and the enlargement of the range of purchase options have made it necessary for continuous regulation at a national and supranational level for a policy that defends domestic products and consumers from the aggressiveness of some market players. Consumers have a right to know what they are buying, but we must

also secure a commercial advantage for companies that increase operational standards and guarantee their products' hygiene safety and (nutritional and organoleptic) quality with precise traceability conditions for the productive and commercial chain. The temptation to commit commercial fraud is very strong; it cannot be held in check merely by relying on the good faith of the promoters. It is extremely important to develop a system of guarantees for the world of production and consumption that can be used as a monitoring tool and as a strategic lever for access to consumer markets deliberately in search of safety and quality. In order to operationally safeguard, it is necessary to be able to follow the passage taken by food, feed, animals and/or products at all stages of the supply chain, from production to processing and distribution, with the identification made available on labels and/or through certifications.

Since its constitution, among the European Union's objectives was the one of free movement of goods, with consumers guaranteed information on the quality of the product being bought. Today EU regulations, the strictest in the world, have established the food classification and place of production as well as requirements for safety and quality. These regulations translate into constraints but also opportunities for companies that must acquire the information elements useful for defining behavior strategies. European efforts for food safety were kicked off with the adoption of a comprehensive strategy "*Safety from farm to table*" and with the Green Paper on the general principles of food law in 1997 followed by the White Book on food safety in 2000. In 2002 came the General Food Law regulation, which introduced the basic principle of an integrated approach to the (non-sectoral) supply chain. It stated that, as of 1 January 2005, for the corporate traceability of a product of animal origin, "*food and feed business operators shall be able to identify any person from whom they have been supplied with a food, a feed, a food-producing animal, or any substance intended to be incorporated into a food or feed. To this end, such operators shall have in place systems and procedures which allow for this information to be made available to the competent authorities on demand.*" The purpose is to keep track of the history of raw materials and processing undergone by feeds, animals or their products, ingredients, additives, etc. to isolate a lot in case of emergency and to allow supervisory bodies to handle any dangerous situations. In order to evaluate the risks associated with the food chain a European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), based in Parma, was also set up. It has laid down procedures for scientific evaluations: analyzing the public perception of risks; working together with national authorities, interested parties, and the media; ensuring consistency among the various evaluations. In 2004, Regulations 852, 853, 854, and 882 govern the hygiene, controls, and regulatory compliance of food products of animal origin intended for human consumption and the regulations on the health and well-being of the animals. In 2006, the hygiene package stipulated that all EU Member States must have the same hygiene criteria for food production and for health checks. The uniformity of health regulations makes possible the circulation of safe food with a control system that considers animal health and welfare, with activities managed by central authorities (Ministry of Health), regional authorities (regional health departments), and provincial and local authorities (the local health agencies' veterinary services).

In Italy, regulations to assure food safety along the production and processing chain for each food category have been issued, providing for the introduction of traceability systems indicating origin. D.L. 135/2009 stipulates that products or commodities to be sold or

advertised as “made in Italy” must have been processed and packaged exclusively in Italy. It is compulsory for the food’s label to indicate the place where the raw materials used were cultivated or bred. Rules on food supplements, colorings, vitamins, minerals, veterinary drug residues, pesticides, and materials in contact with food are also in force. For individual products, the arrangements for the compulsory indications are defined by the decree of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, in concert with the Minister of Economic Development and previous consultations with representative national organizations in the production and transformation sectors. The regions may make use of the Health and Anti-Adulteration Centers of the Carabinieri and the local police to carry out checks on the implementation of the provisions.