

The Veterinary and Food Board

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ADDRESS OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Dear reader,



It is a pleasure to introduce you the first yearbook of the Veterinary and Food Board (VFB).

Our country has taken the responsibility for doing everything possible to ensure that goods made available to the consumers are safe, healthy and of high quality. The most effective way to achieve this is to have as detailed overview of the evolution stages of goods as possible. This is known as from the stable to table or from the farm to fork approach, according to which equal attention is paid to all stages of food production and processing

starting from the production of feedingstuffs and birth of animals right up to the moment where food is placed on the table of the consumers. In other words, it is a comprehensive set of different animal health, animal welfare and food safety measures that are applied to different levels of food processing.

High level of food safety, animal health and animal welfare are the objectives that a control system, which is based on national and European Union requirements and also on internationally acknowledged principles, should help achieve. Development of this system in accordance with the characteristics of the particular control areas and the practical execution of supervision are the main tasks of VFB.

Countries where such from the stable to table chain is complete, meaning that the chain is not divided between different institutions, are in better circumstances. However, present situation has lead us to very close and enriching cooperation in many different ways with such governmental and state authorities like the Health Protection Inspectorate, the Consumer Protection Board, the Plant Production Inspectorate, the Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board, the Veterinary and Food

Laboratory and the Tax and Customs Board. However, contacts with the producers` and processors` associations should never be considered less important. These contacts have enabled VFB to clarify the requirements serving as a basis for its activities and introduce procedures that have been developed in order to check whether requirements are met. These contacts have also given us necessary feedback that helps us work more efficiently.

This yearbook is a summary of the development stage of the system, of the achieved results and of things what the future may bring.

I wish you a pleasant reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ago Pärtel', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ago Pärtel
Director General

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE VETERINARY AND FOOD BOARD

The Veterinary and Food Board (VFB) was established in 2000 as a result of reorganisation of the Veterinary and Food Inspectorate (VFI). This reorganisation was realised by extending the competence of VFI in accordance with the Veterinary Activities Organisation Act, the Infectious Animal Disease Control Act and the Food Act, which all entered into force on 1 January of the same year, stipulating a change of the status of the governmental agency that execute these tasks. Regulation No 12 of the Minister of Agriculture of 16 March 2000 on the reorganisation of the Veterinary and Food Inspectorate, confirmation of the statute of the Veterinary and Food Board, the structure and personnel of the Veterinary and Food Board and local offices thereof entered into force on 1 April 2000.

The Veterinary and Food Board, a governmental agency carrying out its tasks under the government of the Ministry of Agriculture, functions as a supervising body and sees to that that the requirements stipulated by the legislation that governs veterinary, food safety, market regulation, animal welfare and farm animal breeding are followed and executes supervision over fulfilment of these requirements and applies enforcement by state pursuant to the procedures and in the amount prescribed by law. In addition to the mentioned acts, VFB adheres in its professional activities the Trade, Import And Export of Animals and Animal Products Act, the Import and Export Veterinary Control Act, the Animal Protection Act, the Farm Animals Breeding Act, the Organic Farming Act, the Medicinal Products Act, the Common Agricultural Policy Implementation Act, the Feeding Stuffs Act and other legislation laid down pursuant to these acts.

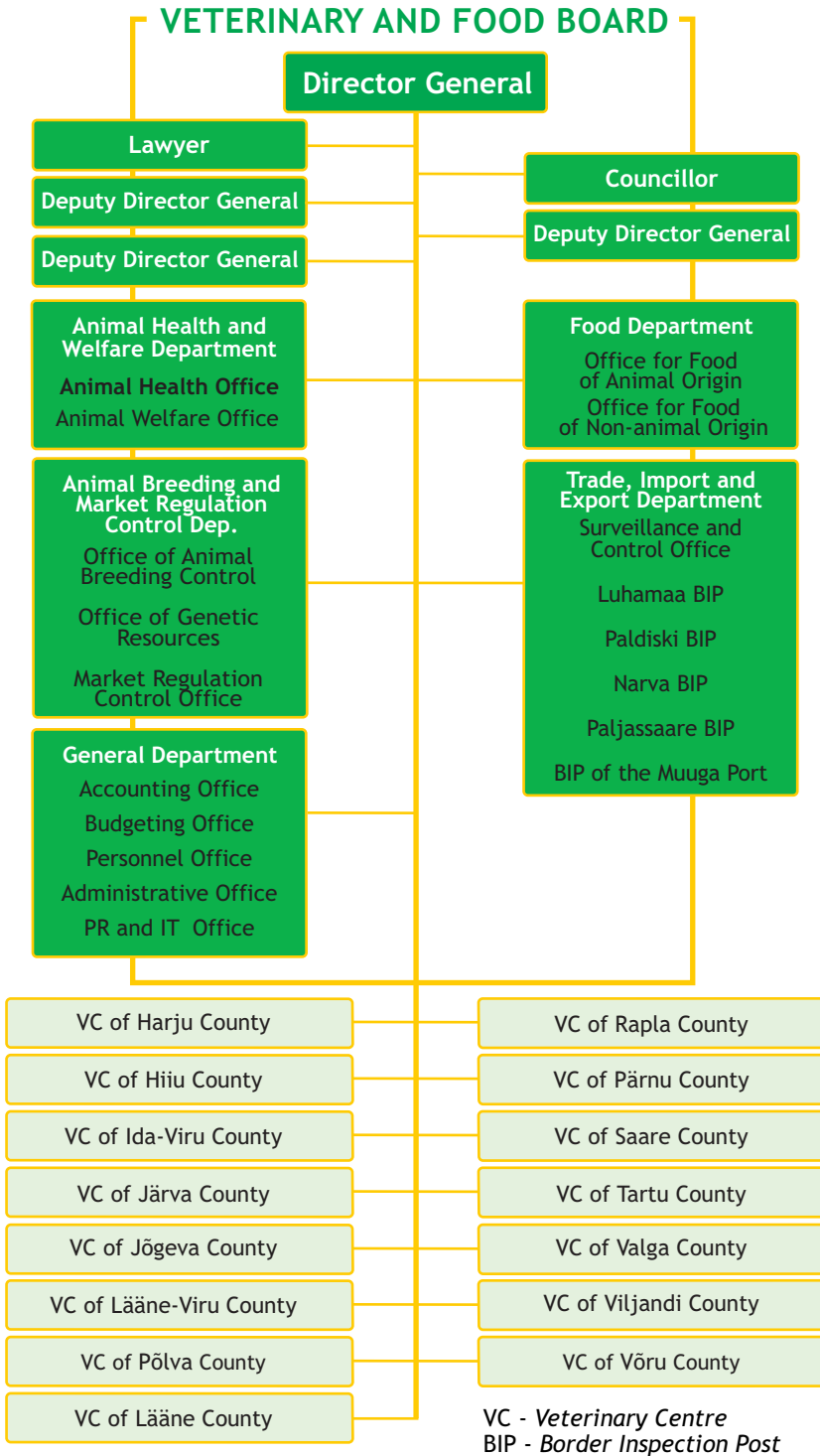
The broader objective of VFB is to ensure the consumers the production of safe, healthy and quality raw materials for food and food, to prevent and eradicate infectious animal diseases, to protect people from diseases common to both people and animals and diseases that are spread by animals, but at the same time to protect animals from human activity or inactivity endangering their health and welfare, to ensure productivity of farm animals and increase their genetic value, and to preserve genetic pool and profitability of keeping animals.

The tasks of the Veterinary and Food Board are to:

- plan and organise the prevention and control of infectious animal diseases;
- protect humans from diseases common to both people and animals;
- protect animals from factors endangering their welfare and demand that the animals are kept and treated as appropriate;
- grant approval to enterprises involved in handling foodstuffs and persons who determine the quality classes of carcasses;
- check the safety of raw material for food and food when raw material for food and food are produced, during their preliminary processing, processing, transportation and wholesale;
- execute supervision over organic processing of raw material for food and food;
- organise laboratory analysis in order to diagnose infectious animal diseases and assess the properties of food, feedingstuffs, hay, straw, medicated feedingstuffs and drinking water;
- protect the environment from harmful factors that are the result of keeping animals or infectious animal diseases;
- issue activity licences for the provision of veterinary services;
- control the use of medicinal products and medicated feedingstuffs by veterinarians and animal-keepers manufacturing animal products;
- check animals, raw material for food and food, including checks of products of animal origin and agricultural products carrying markings that refer to organic farming, upon their importation to the Republic of Estonia;
- arrange the grant of approval to persons involved in animal breeding;
- execute supervision over animal breeding;
- organise preservation of genetic resources of farm animals;
- organise control procedures necessary for the implementation market regulation measures on milk and meat market.

In performing its tasks, VFB uses the services of the Veterinary and Food Laboratory, laboratories authorised in accordance with the Veterinary Activities Organisation Act, laboratories that hold an activity licence for a veterinary laboratory and laboratories authorised in accordance with the Food Act.

ORGANISATION



The organisation of the Veterinary and Food Board consists of the Central Office and 15 local offices – Veterinary Centres in the counties.

When the main objective of the Central Office is to coordinate supervision, the local offices carry out supervision.

The Central Office of the Veterinary and Food Board consists of five departments:

- the Animal Health and Welfare Department consists of the Animal Health Office and the Animal Welfare Office.
- the Food Department consists of the Office for Food of Non-Animal Origin and the Office for Food of Animal Origin.
- the Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control Department consists of the Office of Animal Breeding Control, the Office of Genetic Resources and the Market Regulation Control Office.
- the Trade, Import and Export Department consists of the Surveillance and Control Office and 5 Border Inspection Posts, the Veterinary and Food Control Offices of Luhamaa, Paldiski, Narva, Paljassaare and Muuga Port.
- the General Department consists of the Accounting Office, the Budgeting Office, the Personnel Office, the Administrative Office, and the Public Relations and IT Office.

VFB employs currently 271 people, 105 work in the Central Office and 166 in the counties Veterinary Centres.

In addition to the above-mentioned employees, 191 authorised veterinarians hold an activity licence and they have been granted the authority to check the state of the objects that are within the competence of VFB pursuant to the Veterinary Activities Organisation Act.

The Veterinary and Food Board is managed by the Director General Ago Pärtel.

The Director General has three deputies:

- Raimond Strastin, the Deputy in the Field of Veterinary and Food Control;
- Katrin Reili, the Deputy in the Field of Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control;
- Vladimir Razumovski, the Deputy in the Administrative Field.

The management of the Veterinary and Food Board includes also the councillor Olev Kalda and the lawyer Indrek Halliste.



The management: Olev Kalda (councillor), Vladimir Razumovski (the Deputy in the Administrative Field), Indrek Halliste (lawyer), Raimond Strastin (the Deputy in the Field of Veterinary and Food Control), Katrin Reili (the Deputy in the Field of Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control), Ago Pärtel (Director General)

ANIMAL HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The structural units of the department are the Animal Health Office and the Animal Welfare Office.

The Animal Health Office organises infectious animal diseases control and applies measures for the protection of people from diseases common to both humans and animals and diseases that are spread by animals; executes supervision over the identification and registration of animals and conducts veterinary controls of movements of animals in the state; deals with the protection of the environment from harmful factors related to animal-keeping and animal diseases; controls the use of medicines and medicated feedingstuffs by veterinarians and animal-keepers producing animal products; arranges the work of the state veterinary service and coordinates and executes supervision over veterinary aid, treatment and prevention; grants approval to and organises registration of buildings and facilities where animals are kept; advises on building design documentation; participates in the preparation and carrying out of state and international projects on animal health.

In executing its tasks the Animal Health Office:

- advises and carries out training courses for the supervisory officials of local offices (Veterinary Centres in the counties) and authorised veterinarians;
- coordinates and examines their work;
- issues precepts and decisions for correction of deficiencies;
- communicates with the officials of foreign countries, other authorities, ministries, public organisations (OIE, the European Commission, WHO, etc).

There is an animal health specialist in every county, who is responsible for solving the problems of this particular field.

The aim of the **Animal Welfare Office** is to ensure that animals are protected from activity or inactivity that endangers or may endanger their health or welfare.

The Animal Welfare Office organises and ensures supervision over the health and welfare of animals, birds, fish, invertebrates; consults and carries out training sessions for the supervisory officials and authorised

veterinarians of local offices (the Veterinary Centres in the counties); arranges and executes supervision over the observance of legislation governing veterinary services and animal welfare within its competence; makes proposals for amending legislation that regulates animal welfare issues; grants approval to buildings and facilities where animals are kept, advises on building design documentation.



There is an official appointed in every country who is responsible for the supervision and activities related to animal welfare issues.

In order to fulfil its responsibilities, the Animal Welfare Office communicates with foreign countries, other authorities, ministries and public organisations (the Estonian Animal Protection Society, the Estonian Academic Animal Protection Society).

The Animal Health and Animal Welfare Department is headed by the Head of Department Maarja Kristian (phone +372 605 1736, maarja.kristian@vet.agri.ee).

FOOD DEPARTMENT

The fields of activity and main tasks of the Food Department are to organise and execute supervision over the requirements provided for in legislation governing the field within the limits of the Board's competence, to arrange training courses for the food control supervisory officials and the authorised veterinarians, to participate in drafting legislation on food safety and food quality.

The structural units of the department are:

The task of the **Office for Food of Animal Origin** is to ensure supervision over the observance of requirements provided for in legislation governing the handling of milk, meat, fish, eggs and honey, and planning surveillance of food safety related to food of animal origin.

The task of the **Office for Food of Non-Animal Origin** is to ensure supervision over the observance of requirements provided for in legislation governing bakery, confectionery, cereals, vegetable and other raw material of non-animal origin, storage of raw material for food and food, including wholesale, and to organise supervision over laboratories analysing the samples taken in the course of self-checking, organic farming and novel food.

The main task of the specialists of the Food Department is to supervise the handling of food at enterprises so that only safe food meeting all requirements is made available to the consumers.

The main activities of the specialists of the Department exercising food control are:

- granting approval to the food handling enterprises;
- planning, coordinating and analysing the results of supervision over food safety;
- coordinating the work of the supervisory officials working in the counties, their training and counselling.



The Food Department is headed by the Head of Department Heneli Sepp (phone +372 605 1729, heneli.sepp@vet.agri.ee)

ANIMAL BREEDING AND MARKET REGULATION CONTROL DEPARTMENT

The Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control Department deals with the organisation and execution of supervision over the observance of requirements established by the Animal Breeding Act and the EU Common Agricultural Policy Implementation Act and the legislation established pursuant to them.

The competence of the Department is to: grant approval to breeding associations, persons conducting productivity monitoring and preservers of threatened breeds; preserve biological variety and genetic resources; plan and carry out supervision regarding intervention buying and private storage of milk products; implement measures governing meat and meat products` market and execute supervision in this area; execute supervision over the system by what the quality classes of swine, bovine and ovine carcasses are determined; participate in drafting legislation concerning animal breeding and market regulation; organise training sessions for the supervisory officials who are responsible for the implementation of animal breeding and market regulation measures; train and grant approval to persons who determine quality classes of carcasses of slaughtered animals.

Three units belong to this Department:

The task of the **Office of Animal Breeding Control** is to perform checks at approved breeding associations, persons performing productivity monitoring and persons who preserve threatened breeds, and animal keepers so that it can be established that all the requirements laid down by legislation regulating this particular field are met as well as to execute control over breeding programmes.

The task of the **Office of Genetic Resources** is to organise preservation of biological variety and genetic resources, to control that preservation/breeding programmes are carried out, to check applicants who have applied for the support for threatened animal breeds.

The task of the **Market Regulation Control Office** is to plan, coordinate and execute supervision necessary for the application of market regulation measures for milk products (butter, skim milk powder) and for the meat market; to check that the products under the market regulation measures are in compliance with the quality requirements; to manage

and coordinate the determination of uniform quality classes for swine, bovine and ovine carcasses using SEUROP-system in Estonia; to train and grant approval to the officials of this particular field and to exercise supervision over the quality of work performed by them.



The work in the Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control Department is directed by the Deputy Director General Katrin Reili (phone +372 601 6590, katrin.reili@vet.agri.ee)

TRADE, IMPORT AND EXPORT DEPARTMENT

The Trade, Import and Export Department was established on 1 May 2004 because of the accession of Estonia to the European Union. The Border Service of the Veterinary and Food Board was reorganised and a new department with 54 employees was established in the organisation of the Central Office of the Veterinary and Food Board.

The Department was established in order to execute supervision over import and transit of goods from third countries subject to veterinary and food control on the border of the Republic of Estonia, which is now also the external border of the European Union, but also over the trade between Member States. The Department also administers a common European Union risk notification system.

The tasks of the Department are to:

- check on border posts within the competence of the department that the requirements laid down by legislation concerning veterinary medicine, food handling and animal protection upon import, export and transit of animals, products of animal origin and raw material for food, have not been violated;
- organise the development, examination and approval of export and import certificates;
- administrate the food and feedingstuffs risk notification system in Estonia;
- maintain records of the amounts of imported and transit goods subject to veterinary and food control moving in the Republic of Estonia;
- arrange further training courses for the supervisory officials of the Department.

The Department includes the **Surveillance and Control Office**, the

Veterinary and Food Control Office and **five Border Inspection Posts:**

- Veterinary and Food Control Office of Luhamaa BIP;
- Veterinary and Food Control Office of Paldiski BIP;
- Veterinary and Food Control Office of Narva BIP;
- Veterinary and Food Control Office of Paljassaare BIP;
- Veterinary and Food Control Office of Muuga Port BIP;

In performing its tasks, the Department is guided by the legislation of the European Union and the Republic of Estonia.



The Trade, Import and Export Department is headed by the Head of Department Regina Pihlakas (phone +372 605 6886, regina@vet.agri.ee).

GENERAL DEPARTMENT

The units of the General Department are the Accounting Office, the Budgeting Office, the Personnel Office, the Administrative Office, and the Public Relations and Informatics Office.

The **Accounting Office** is responsible for organising accounting for the Board and its local offices; the unit keeps records of tangible and intangible assets and current assets, compiles reports and accounts for salaries.

The **Budgeting Office** draws up the budget of the Board and its local offices; the unit analyses what effects additional liabilities are going to have on the budget and makes proposals based on the analysis; checks and analyses how the budget is executed by the Board and its local offices.

The **Personnel Office** recruits employees, chooses personnel and determines whether the employees meet the approved certification requirements; identifies the needs for training, lays down training principles, draws up a training budget and coordinates training courses; completes pension, social assistance and health insurance fund documents; ensures that the holiday schedule is compiled and keeps records of the personnel of the Board and its local offices, and develops and carries out personnel policy.

The **Administrative Office** receives, registers and forwards documents that have arrived at the Board; provides records management for the management of the Board; organises the work of the unit; coordinates and ensures that joint events (meetings, seminars, trainings) are carried out; ensures supply of utilities and communications, cleaning, guard services and other services to the administrative building.



The General Department is headed by the Head of Department Reet Linsmann (phone +372 605 17 41, reet@vet.agri.ee).

The **Public Relations and Informatics Office** forwards information, approved by the management, describing the activities of the Board to the media, interest groups and other government authorities and arranges exchange of information with them; arranges the communication of the Board and its local offices with the press; arranges the participation of the Board in fairs and information days; coordinates the preparation and publication of information materials introducing the activities of the Board; prepares, amends and changes information on the Board's official Internet page; organises the administration and maintenance of the information systems, the development and implementation of development projects and the designing, useage and maintenance of the databases.

2003 IN THE VETERINARY AND FOOD BOARD

SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VETERINARY AND FOOD BOARD IN 2003

Inspections carried out:

● animal health and animal welfare	11 463
● food control	4 846
● animal breeding	339

Laboratory tests performed:

● laboratory test on animal health	273 421
● conformity assessment of raw material for food and food	8 022

Veterinary and food control on the border:

● total number of examined batches of goods	146 308
● number of batches examined upon import	80 843
● number of batches examined upon transit	47 347
● number of batches examined upon export (incl. re-export)	8 118

Number of approved enterprises and persons:

● enterprises approved pursuant to the Infectious Animal Disease Act	111
● enterprises approved pursuant to the Food Act	1 008
● enterprises approved pursuant to the Organic Farming Act	2
● persons approved who are breeding of farm animals	9

In Estonia, **625** veterinarians hold an activity licence allowing the provision of veterinary services. In 2003, the Veterinary and Food Board had made employment contracts with **191** authorised veterinarians.

In 2003, **146** misdemeanour proceedings were initiated, fines were imposed in the total amount of **423 750** EEK.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE IN 2003

In 2003, altogether **11 463** inspections related to animal health and animal welfare were carried out; the number of laboratory tests performed in connection with animal health was **273 421** in 2003. In 2003, **111** enterprises were approved pursuant to the Infectious Animal Disease Control Act.

The number of TSE (transmissible spongiform encephalopathy) tests performed was **1935**.

Animal health

Estonia has been able to keep its territory free of especially dangerous infectious animal diseases during a long period due to its favourable geographic position and the work done by the veterinarian service, which deserves acknowledgement. Supervisory activities established by the legislation have ensured good epizootic state of our animal populations. In order to achieve this aim, a supervision programme, where tests and vaccinations are shown by different animal species, is laid down every year.

Within the framework of the National Infectious Animal Disease Control Programme, our cattle herds were examined for 30 diseases and on the basis of the results it can be said that the epizootic state of Estonian animal populations is good. Monitoring of fish diseases was added to the previous` years inspections. As rules for fish diseases control have not yet been laid down, the monitoring was planned pursuant to the corresponding legislation of the European Union.

Active control programmes (e.g. bovine leucosis) form a part of the National Infectious Animal Disease Control Programme. The implementation of the programme for the control of bovine enzootic leucosis has given desired results. The cases of leucosis in 1992 – 2003 are given in the following table.

Year	Number of bovine animals that were discovered to have leucosis and were eliminated
1992	33349
1993	9696
1994	2427
1995	1016
1996	521
1997	207
1998	126
1999	72
2000	45
2001	16
2002	14
2003	4

In order to test BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), brain samples were taken from 1935 animals over 24 months of age that were dead or were subjected to emergency slaughter, including emergency slaughtered animals not intended for human consumption, sick slaughtered animals or bovine animals originating from BSE countries. The results of all performed tests were negative. Unfortunately one PHARE project did not realise in 2003, the project would have covered the testing of all bovine animals over 30 months of age slaughtered for food. The mentioned project will start in 2004.

As compared to 2002, the number of rabies cases diagnosed in animals has increased from 422 to 814. The number of rabies cases has increased in wild animals. Of 1401 animals examined in laboratory, 814 were infected. Occurrence of rabies by animal species and counties as follows:

COUNTRY	cattle	horse	goat	sheep	dog	cat	raccoon dog	fox	elk	polecat	rabbit	weasel	beaver	lynx	marten	badger	TOTAL
HARJUMAA	2		1		2	4	40	58	1							2	110
HIIUMAA					1		8	5									14
IDA- VIRUMAA					2		33	10		1							46
JÕGEVAMAA	4				3	3	30	20									60
JÄRVAMAA	9				2	1	14	5	1	1		1		1		1	36
LÄÄNEMAA	9				2		9	16									36
LÄÄNE- VIRUMAA	3				5	3	50	33			1					2	97
PÕLVAMAA		1		1	4	2	12	17									37
PÄRNUMAA	7				2	6	50	38							1		104
RAPLAMAA	9				5	3	28	27		1							73
SAAREMAA						1		1									2
TARTUMAA	1				3	3	48	39		1			1			1	97
VALGAMAA	1					2	3	15									21
VILJANDI- MAA	6				1		28	18		1						2	56
VÕRUMAA					2		9	13								1	25
TOTAL:	51	1	1	1	34	28	362	315	2	5	1	1	1	1	1	9	814

In 2003, 137 716 animals were vaccinated against rabies, mostly cats and dogs, but also farm animals in high-risk areas.

In order to improve the situation as regards rabies, a three-year PHARE project Rabies Oral Vaccination Programme for Wild Animals was launched in 2003.

The general aim of the programme is the eradication of rabies from Estonia; the direct goal is to reduce the number of rabies cases in the populations of domestic and wild animals and minimise the risk to people of the possibility to be infected by rabies.

This project is necessary in order to implement a plan, which is in compliance with the EU legislation, according to which rabies will be eradicated from Estonia by using oral vaccination of wild animals with bait containing the vaccine (90/638/EEC: Council Decision of 27 November 1990 laying down Community criteria for the eradication and monitoring of certain animal diseases).

A more general and long-term aim is to achieve a rabies-free status for Estonia. The project has taken into account the need that the vaccine must have an effect on both raccoon dogs and foxes. The vaccine bait contains bait and a capsule of vaccine hidden inside. The area to be vaccinated is 24 000 - 25 000 km², and bait will be dropped at the density of 20 baits per km². The vaccination campaigns will be held twice a year – in spring and autumn, so that pregnant animals would be vaccinated in spring and cubs born after the spring campaign would be vaccinated in autumn.

The baits will be mainly dropped by plane or helicopter in the bait drop area. The first vaccine drop should take place in the spring of 2005.

In 2003, 10 525 animal holdings were inspected in the course of which 478 animals lacking identification were discovered and 2232 precepts were issued. When animal holdings were inspected, more attention was paid on how the feedingstuffs containing animal proteins and food waste originating from catering enterprises are used as well as on the identification and registration of animals.

One of the most labour intensive tasks is to prepare operational instructions for the control of infectious diseases entered in the list of especially dangerous infectious animal diseases, which provide instructions how to behave in a situation when an epidemic breaks out in Estonia. A so-called horizontal action plan has been developed, which lays down the basic principles of cooperation between different institutions, the command lines, general instructions for action and other aspects of utmost importance in the control of infectious animal diseases.

Detailed measures for the control of certain infectious diseases can be found in the instructions.

By now, the operational instructions for the control of foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever, avian influenza and Newcastle disease have been approved and operational instructions for the control of ovine catarrhal fever, African horse sickness, African swine fever, swine vesicular disease, rinderpest, small ruminants plague, sheep and goat pox, nodular dermatitis, vesicular stomatitis and infectious salmon anaemia have been written.



A serious problem for the execution of supervision over identification and registration of animals is that our keepers and buyers of animals quite often fail to follow the set rules. Many keepers and buyers of animals do not submit the required information on the movement of animals to the Agricultural Registers and Information Board (ARIB). As a result, a situation arises where the actual location of certain animals recorded in the register of ARIB is unknown.

Animal Protection

That the requirements laid down for the animal welfare are met is checked in the course of routine inspections. Inspections are also carried out on the basis of complaints received by the Veterinary Centres. In 2003, 11 463 routine inspections on the state of animal welfare were carried out, 70 inspections were carried out in response to complaints. Deficiencies were discovered in 242 cases. 294 precepts were issued for the violation of requirements of animal welfare, 106 follow-up inspections were made and in eight cases misdemeanour proceedings were initiated.

In 2003, 85 complaints were recorded at the Veterinary Centres. Based on them, situation of animal welfare was assessed in 70 cases. Most of the submitted complaints were against pet owners (45) and animal holdings (26). Most of the complaints were recorded in Harjumaa County (40) and Tartumaa County (20), the number was lower in other counties.

Adherence to animal welfare requirements is checked routinely at animal holdings and slaughterhouses once a year. For this purpose, VTB has developed certain inspection documents. When a serious violation of law is discovered or inspection is carried out in response to a complaint, an animal welfare assessment document will be drawn up on the spot.

For the violation of requirements laid down for the keeping of animals, 182 precepts were issued, of which 14 were for the violation of requirements laid down for keeping pigs, 3 for equine, 20 for pets and 2 for poultry. Follow-up checks were carried out in 51 times. One misdemeanour proceeding was initiated against violation of requirements set for the keeping of bovine animals.

Altogether 99 slaughterhouses were inspected; in 52 establishments violation of welfare requirements of animals intended for slaughter were discovered. 77 precepts were issued, 50 for the stunning of farm animals, 14 for animals to be slaughtered and 13 for keeping animals before slaughtering. Follow-up inspections were carried out in 38 cases.

Pet owners were inspected in 33 cases, 32 inspections were made in response to a complaint. Violations were found in 12 cases.

Three precepts were issued in order to stop unacceptable behaviour towards animals and three follow-up inspections were carried out. Four misdemeanour proceedings were initiated.

Animal shelters were inspected 14 times during routine checks and in response to a complaint in three times. Violations were discovered at three animal shelters, three precepts were also issued. Vehicles used for transporting animals in Estonia were examined 19 times, one pursuant to a complaint. Of the vehicles, 14 did not meet the requirements. Vehicles

used for international transport were examined in 42 times, two vehicles were found deficient. In total, 24 precepts were made in connection of means of transportation and 11 follow-up checks were carried out. Three misdemeanour proceedings were started.

During routine inspections, persons providing veterinary services, including animal clinics, were checked in 132 cases. Three inspections were initiated because of complaints. One deficiency was discovered, three precepts were issued.

One routine inspection dealt with animal competition, public exhibition and sale of animals, two precepts were issued, and in one case, a follow-up inspection was carried out.

New requirements that are in compliance with EU provisions concerning the conditions under which pigs and calves must be kept came into force at the beginning of 2003 and new requirements concerning the conditions under which hens must be kept came into force at the beginning of July. The Government of the Republic regulation laying down a list of documents to be submitted for applying for an activity licence of a zoo and rules for application processing and issuance of an activity licence, the regulation laying down the requirements for keeping zoo animals and the rules for setting up a committee on carrying out animal testing, tasks and work procedures thereof and the application form for animal testing also came into force.

One source of worry regarding animal welfare is the domestic transport of animals. The regulation currently in force sets out specific requirements regarding international transport and domestic transport that lasts over eight hours. The requirements established in the Animal Protection Act for the means of transport are very general.



All this makes it more difficult to carry out inspections.

A large number of stray animals poses a great problem in Estonia. The number of homes for strays is small and they are in poor condition. The municipalities cannot establish new homes for stray animals because of scant financial means. It is necessary to create a common national system for the identification and registration of dogs and cats in such a way that

an animal could be linked to its owner. Currently there is no legislative basis for this system to be set up and the authority to keep records on dogs and, if necessary, other pets has been given to the local municipalities.

FOOD CONTROL IN 2003

In 2003, 4846 food control inspections were performed. 8022 analyses were carried out to assess the compliance of raw material for food and food with the requirements. Pursuant to the Food Act, 1008 enterprises were granted approval: 136 were meat enterprises, 41 were milk enterprises, 94 were fish enterprises. The Veterinary and Food Board did not issue any novel food licence.

The officials of the Food Department were actively involved in the process of drafting new legislation initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and in amending current laws. The most important legislative texts were:

- Government of the Republic regulation on the approval of requirements for labelling of food and procedure for labelling and presentation of information in any other manner and procedure for informing of origin of raw material;
- Government of the Republic regulation laying down the procedures for sampling and analysing control samples taken for the determination of pollutant content in raw material and food;
- Government of the Republic regulation laying down special requirements for the labelling of food containing genetically modified food additives or flavours;
- Amendments to the Organic Farming Act.

Government of the Republic regulation establishing the requirements for the labelling beef came into force on 1 January 2004.

At the beginning of 2003, three basic acts on market regulation came into force on the classification of carcasses of farm animals, laying down requirements for the system, for the enterprises and for the state supervision:

- the requirements of the quality classes of bovine carcasses and methods and rules for determining conformity requirements – adopted on 21.01.2003, No 16 RTI 2003, 8, 39

- the requirements of the quality classes of ovine carcasses and methods and rules for determining conformity requirements – adopted on 21.01.2003, No 15 RTI 2003, 8, 38
- the requirements of the quality classes of swine carcasses and methods and rules for determining conformity requirements – adopted on 21.01.2003, No 14 RTI 2003, 8, 37

During the year, the main activity of the Food Department was the grant of approval to the enterprises. A national programme for salmonella surveillance was introduced. The rules for monitoring pollutants and activities arising from them were specified in more detail in new legislation.



A large number of different DG SANCO FVO (the Food and Veterinary Office of the Directorate-General of the Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission) missions visited Estonia with the aim to check the administrative capability of the Veterinary and Food Board in food safety and to establish by carrying out controls at enterprises if the requirements set for different sectors are met. The work procedures for the FVB Central Office and local offices were changed based on the notes of mission reports.

In 2003, the planning and exercising of supervision over laboratories that analyse samples taken in the course of self-checking was started. The first step was to develop a questionnaire in order to map the state of this particular field in general. Later on the gathered data was analysed and checks were carried out.

A large number of training courses were arranged for the inspectors; the most important of them, which focused on food safety supervisory activities as well as on animal health issues, was carried out in the end of 2003 with the help of PHARE in conjunction with the Estonian Agricultural University.

PHARE 2001 project No ES2001/IB/AG/01 Strengthening of Food Inspection System in Estonia, launched in August 2002, was continued in

2003. The members of the project work groups are also chief specialists in non-animal origin food hygiene. The main objectives of the project are to develop guidelines for inspections, which will be prepared for the supervisory officials, and to compile a set of good hygiene practice principles for retail and wholesale enterprises.

In 2003, the Estonian-Dutch MATRA cooperation project Capacity Building for EU Integration in The Field of Agri-Environment, focusing in particular on organic farming, started in 2002 and aimed at improving the professional knowledge and skills of the supervisory officials who carry out checks at organic processing enterprises.



Since 2003, a representative of the Estonian competent authority (the Veterinary and Food Board) participates in the meetings of the implementation work group of the Regulation No 258/97 of the European Commission. The representatives of the authorities of the Member States responsible for the supervision of novel food attend these meetings. Discussions are held on the applications submitted for novel food licences and on new draft regulations etc.

A seminar on novel food in the framework of EU PHARE 2001 Project No ES2001/IB/AG/O was held for the inspectors of the Veterinary and Food

Board and the Health Protection Inspectorate on 21 November 2003. The lecturers were the experts of the competent Danish authority; the themes of the seminar were the legislation on novel food in the European Union and execution of supervision over novel food in Denmark.

In 2003, the Veterinary and Food Board did not issue any licences for novel food. The Novel Food Commission counselling the Veterinary and Food Board on novel food met only once in 2003.

An overview of the supervision activity of the Food Department is given in the following table.

NO	FOODGROUP	NUMBER OF ENTERPRISES OF 1 JANUARY 2004	NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS IN 2003 CENTRAL OFFICE OF VFB	NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS IN COUNTIES 2003 / OVERALL NUMBER OF SAMPLES
1	Meat enterprises: large	14	37	286/1132
	small	122	88	919/2431
2	Milk enterprises	41	23	492/981
3	Fish enterprises	94	32	971/882
4	Honey packaging enterprises	14	-	27/46
5	Egg packaging enterprises	20	-	80/107
6	Producers of egg products	1	2	12/6
7	Enterprises processing raw material for food of non-animal origin and food	330	24	1428/1590
8	Enterprises storing raw material for food and food, including wholesale	392	17	1006/86
9	Organic processing enterprises	4	4	3/-
10	Enterprises transporting raw material for food and food	261	1	223/-
11	TOTAL	1293	228	5447/7261
12	Laboratories analysing samples taken in the course of self-check	103	14	-

Pursuant to the order of the Director General of 14 March 2003, the specialists of the Food Department are required to check the work done by the officials of the local offices in accordance with an approved plan and rules (e.g. handling documents and administration of data, knowledge of legislation, execution of instructions and other orders, filling in supervision documents, physical control of an enterprise etc).

ANIMAL BREEDING IN 2003

The Animal Breeding Department, which came into being after the reorganisation of the Animal Breeding Inspectorate, is a department of the Veterinary and Food Board since 1 January 2003. The authority of state supervision of the Animal Breeding Inspectorate were transferred to VFB.

In 2003, controls and follow-up controls were performed 280 times, checking the compliance with the Animal Breeding Act and other acts established pursuant to this act by animal species:

● Cattle	246	● Horses	8
● Pigs	13	● Fur animals	3
● Sheep	8	● Insemination station	2



During the year, 59 controls and follow-up controls to check how the preservation/breeding programmes have been carried out, whether the horses of Estonian native breed are in compliance with the requirements of the agri-environment support and to perform control at the applicants of the Estonian native cattle breed. Supervision over animal breeding was executed on 339 object and nine persons involved in animal breeding were approved.

A new Animal Breeding Act entered into force on 1 January. The earlier act (effective until 31.12.2002) was in compliance with the requirements of zootechnics legislation. The need for new legislation came from the necessity to reduce the state's participation in breeding activities and give more decision-making power to private breeding associations, which is how it is done in developed countries.

Pursuant to the Animal Breeding Act, in force since 1 January 2003, and taking into account the applications submitted to the Veterinary and Food Board, the following breeding associations were approved in 2003:

- Estonian Pedigree Animal Breeders Cooperative;
- Estonian Country Cattle Breeders Society;
- Estonian Pedigree Pigs Breeding Cooperative;

- Estonian Horse Breeders Society;
- Estonian Sport Horses Breeders Society;
- Estonian Horse Protection Union;
- Estonian Trotters Association;
- Estonian Sheep Breeders Society;
- Estonian Bird Growers Society.

A standard for public service and its application were approved, which serves as an aid when application for approval is submitted.

A form of an inspection report for animal breeding together with an appendix and a form of a follow-up inspection report were developed and taken into use.

THE BORDER SERVICE OF THE VETERINARY AND FOOD BOARD IN 2003

Altogether 15 Boarder Inspection Posts subordinated to the Boarder Service provided veterinary and food control in 2003. Three of the posts were located on the railway, five on highways, six at the ports and one at the airport. On 1 July the Boarder Post on Murati highway was closed because the Latvian veterinary and food boarder post was closed down.

There are 98 employees, 90 of them are supervisory officials. Six supervisory officials left during the year.

In 2003, 146 308 batches of goods subject to veterinary and food control were examined on the boarder. Of the total amount, 55,2% (80 843 batches) was imported goods, 32,4% (47 347 batches) was transit goods and 12,4% (18 118 batches) of goods was for export. In total, 5809 special licences were issued for the import of live animals and goods.

Different violations of re-quirements were discovered on the boarder during the veterinary and food control and an appropriate inspection report was completed in 1913 cases. This was the reason why 165 batches of goods were returned and 37 batches were sent to be destroyed.

During the veterinary and food control on the boarder, 2160 samples were taken, planned food samples comprised 72,8% (1829 samples). Of this number 72,8% (1332 samples) were samples of food of animal origin and 27,2% (497 samples) were samples of food of non-animal origin.

The Boarder Service issued 194 precepts in the past year. Most often, the precepts were issued for goods that were considered noncompliant to the requirements based on the results of laboratory analysis. There were also a significant number of precepts on deficient labelling and vehicles.



There were 41 misdemeanour proceedings; fines were imposed in 21 cases, fines warning in 12 cases and oral warning in 8 cases. The main reasons behind the misdemeanour proceedings were that goods were not labelled as required upon import, that transportation and the vehicle did not meet the requirements. There were

also problems with customs warehouses-terminals in connection with the requirements of approval laid down by the Food Act.

Last year the Border Inspections Posts in Tallinn region of the Boarder Service and the Central Office inspected customs warehouses-terminals located in the customs control area and appropriate inspection reports were drawn up in 80 cases. If a deficiency discovered in the customs warehouse-terminal was something that was a violation of requirements of the Food Act, precepts were issued stating that the deficiencies must be corrected.

The employees of the Surveillance and Control Office of the Boarder Service participated actively in drafting legislation last year. The most important legislative texts in the drafting process of which they had participated were connected with Estonia joining the European Union. These acts were: Trade in Animals and Products of Animal Origin and Import and Export Thereof Veterinary Supervision Act, amendments to the Veterinary Activities Organisation Act, but also the Government of the Republic Regulation No 153 adopted on 14 May 2003 laying down the requirements for the border inspection posts authorised for import and export of animals and products of animal origin and a list of border inspection posts approved for the import and export of animals, products of animal origin, raw material for food, food and feed and the basis of and rules for entering and elimination of border inspection post to and from the list. Participation in the discussions about the harmonisation with the

legislation of the European Union draft acts and proposals: the Food Act, the Customs Code, the regulation of the Minister of Agriculture No 5 of 16 January 2002 laying down a list of goods that are checked upon import or export, contents of the special permit and the rules for application submission and issuing thereof, the rules for exercising supervision over animals and products of animal origin and food and raw material for food, the regulation of the Government of the Republic No 292 of 10.09.2002 laying down the rules for the entry and exit of ships and small ships to and from an inland sea and ports, etc. The current instructions for the inspectors who are directly involved with documentation on the border were also amended or new instructions were developed.

A close and effective cooperation with the Customs Board is worth mentioning: because of a cooperation agreement, several meetings were held that led to a better mutual understanding, many misunderstandings were solved. The agreement has ensured harmonisation of different procedures and a better mutual communication between the two authorities. The most essential achievement in this cooperation was a handbook about the documents and seals used at the Border Service, meant for the customs officials; the Customs Board also accepted the lead seal used at the Border Service as a preventive measure that a customs official is not allowed to remove without a permission granted by the Border Service, ensuring this way intactness of goods until supervisory officials have made their decisions.

Besides the Customs Board, we cooperated with other government agencies: the Consumer Protection Board, the Health Protection Inspectorate, the Plant Production Inspectorate, the Veterinary and Food Laboratory etc.

The Supervisory Office of the Border Service also inspected all the veterinary and food control border posts (excluding the Roomassaare Port) twice a year - this has ensured an effective supervision over the documents completed at the Border Posts and also control over the documentation and hardware. Various disciplinary offences were discovered.

During the period of 24-28 March 2003 the mission of DG SANCO FVO (the Food and Veterinary Office of the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General of the European Commission) took place at the Border Service in the course of which the experts of the European Union visited Luhamaa highway and Paldiski Port Border Points. The report of the mission and suggestions made there have been of great assistance in the reorganisation of the Central Office as well as the Border Posts,

which has been done with the aim to bring them in compliance with the requirements of the European Union, but also to harmonise the legislation with the legislation of the European Union.



In conclusion it can be said that the responsibility of the Border Service of the Veterinary and Food Board to exercise state supervision over the goods subject to veterinary and food control upon their import and export, to execute enforcement by state and to ensure that goods are safe for both people and animals, was met in 2003.

DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN 2003

As regards information technology, 2003 was an interesting year for the Veterinary and Food Board (VFB). Many hardware devices were updated and replaced in order to improve the safety of data exchange with other companies and institutions. Several software solutions, special software, were designed to make the work of VFB officials more efficient. Some of the software solutions that VFB started to use in 2003:

- Extranet file administration system
- Time schedule
- Register of misdemeanours
- IT hardware database

As to hardware, we could bring out procurement of network devices that made VFB`s computer network safer and more reliable. Procurement of new computers and servers as well as updating the old ones contributed to the work efficiency. Improvement of the Internet connection should also be mentioned, which made the information flow considerably faster. Some renewed hardware and software solutions realised in 2003:

- New LAN devices
- Replacing the main server and updating adjoining servers
- Improvement of the backup system
- Mobile workplaces were created in the departments
- Updating the firewall

Although there were several renewals of software and hardware in 2003, many useful projects should be carried out in order to develop VFB`s information technology. Programmes that will be taken into use after Estonia has joined the European Union should also be considered.

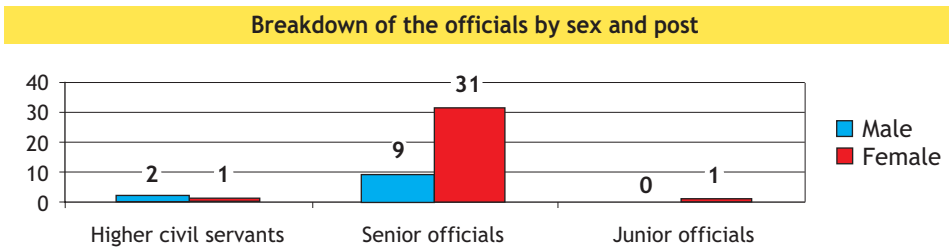
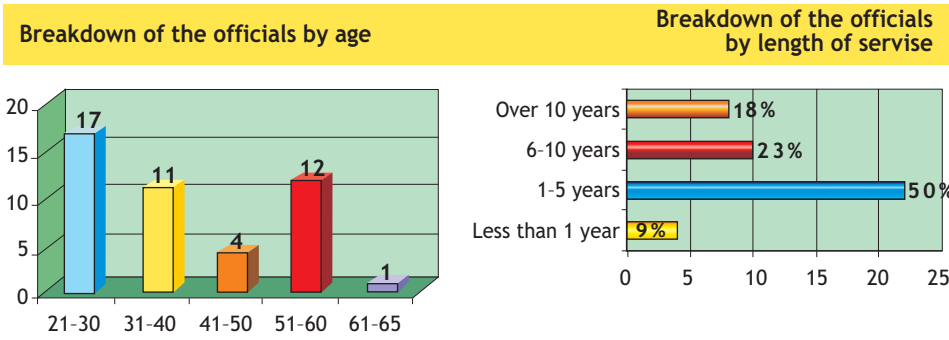
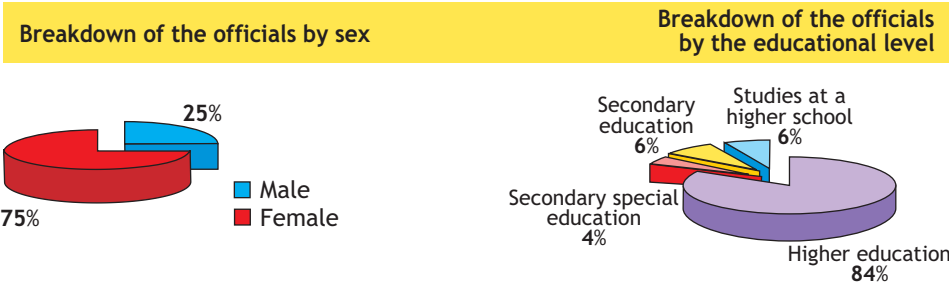
PERSONNEL OF THE VETERINARY AND FOOD BOARD AND PERSONNEL STATISTICS 2003

As of 31 December 2003, 305 officials worked in the Veterinary and Food Board.

During 2003, 14 officials started to work for the Central Office of the Veterinary and Food Board, 10 officials started to work in county Veterinary Centres and four employees at the Border Service.

In 2003, 3 officials left service from the Central Office of the Veterinary and Food Board, 14 left from the county Veterinary Centres and 8 officials from the Border Service of the Veterinary and Food Board.

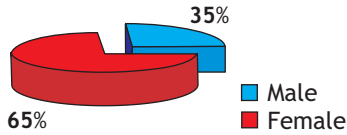
The personnel of the Veterinary and Food Board in 2003 (the Central Office)



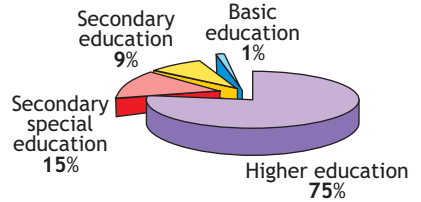
The personell of the Veterinary and Food Board in 2003

(subordinate offices – the Veterinary Centres of the countris and the Border Service

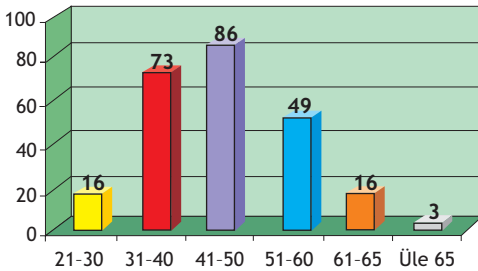
Breakdown of the officials by sex



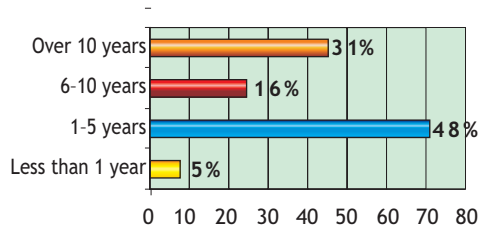
Breakdown of the officials by the educational level



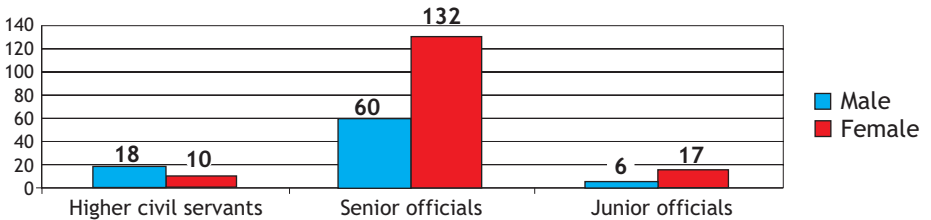
Breakdown of the officials by age



Breakdown of the officials by length of service



Breakdown of the officials by sex and post



PLANS AND CHANGES FOR 2004

In the current year, 2004, the Veterinary and Food Board (VFB) is facing essential changes. The most important changes and new directions are related to Estonia becoming a member of the European Union. Greater changes will affect the organisation of the Board, which has already been reorganised.

In connection with Estonia's accession to the EU, the Border Service of the Veterinary and Food Board was reorganised. In the result a new department of VFB with 54 officials was established – the **Trade, Import and Export Department**. The aim of the Department is to arrange and execute supervision over the fulfilment of requirements pursuant to the legislation governing the corresponding area; to administer the food and feedingstuffs risk notification system in Estonia; to arrange training sessions for the supervisory officials dealing with the problems of trade, import and export of goods within the Community subject to veterinary and food control; to participate in the preparation of draft legislation concerning trade, import and export of goods subject to veterinary and food control. The Surveillance and Control Office and six veterinary and food control Border Posts will belong to the structure of the established department.

Additional responsibility for applying market regulation measures within the competence assigned to VFB was assigned to the Animals Breeding Department. The department was renamed the **Animal Breeding and Market Regulation Control Department** and the corresponding tasks will be carried out by the Market Regulation Control Office.

The **Accounting Office** and the **Administrative Office** were established in the General Department to ensure better provision of supportive functions that the Department supplies and appropriate administration of fees for veterinary supervision.

The Informatics Office was renamed the **Public Relations and IT Office**. For the purposes of better public relations, a new position was created, which is necessary to ensure that information on the activities of the Veterinary and Food Board reach the target groups and are more transparent and to ensure better communication.

Veterinary and Food Board

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