

# **Panel 1 - Inspection systems applied to national movement and foreign trade**

Questions asked by the attending public and replies from Vanessa Warden Hutton.

***In general terms, how effective the controls based on risk analysis have been?***

The shift to an inspection approach based on risk has been beneficial for both the industry and the agency. It makes possible for the agency to use the first-line limited resources that are available for us to focus on high-risk pathways and products. All of that is based on data, science, analysis, and trend analysis, in addition to having a solid framework for any non-compliance, for the reporting and management thereof any time these are detected.

***How reliable are virtual inspections?***

Right now, very reliable. Prior tests need to be arranged with the customer to ensure their readiness and the appropriate computer capacity to meet the requirements of the virtual inspection.

***Have emergency modifications been necessary in order to make virtual inspections valid within your regulatory framework?***

No, virtual inspections do not suspend or stop any other food inspections; therefore, the law is still being fulfilled. We are only inspecting foodstuffs to check their compliance (with the law). Any detected non-compliance requires stopping the inspection, and that the customer makes an appointment for a standard physical inspection. Our laws support that. This approach rewards good behavior.

***Virtual inspections are only carried out for finished products? (i.e. Industrialized products)***

Yes, only canned and commercially prepared foodstuffs (finished products), where we inspect the label on the container to make sure it is in compliance with our food regulations code.

***How many virtual inspections have been stopped due to non-compliance? How many inspections had to be rescheduled to physical inspections? What were the non-compliances detected?***

The following are the most recent statistics since we allowed the industry to submit applications:

As of July 5, any parties wishing to participate with the department that manages the virtual and visual inspection of imported foodstuffs' label that

are subject of inspection and meet the requirements were requested to submit a statement of interest. To date, the department has received 59 statements of interest, and 17 applicants have moved to the approval stage. As of August 13, 6 virtual inspections have been carried out successfully from the regional office in Brisbane. We are just starting with the industry, and we expect to have more data available in 3 to 6 months.

***For a virtual inspection, how do you select the material to inspect from a shipment?***

We follow the same procedures of a physical *onsite* inspection. It is based in documented work instructions and sampling procedures, and it depends on the number of lines to inspect and the furnished documentation. The official in charge determines how to carry out sampling in accordance with all the furnished information.

***Are emergency modifications necessary to make virtual inspections valid within your regulatory framework?***

No, since virtual inspections do not suspend or stop any other food inspections, therefore the law is still being complied with. We are only inspecting foodstuffs to check their compliance (with the law). Any detected non-compliance requires stopping the inspection, and that the customer makes an appointment for a standard physical inspection. Our laws support that.

***Is there any analysis that makes possible to determine which inspection system (virtual or in person) is more efficient to protect health in your country?***

The major efficiency gain comes from not having to do the round-trip for the inspection. We travel long distances to inspect foodstuffs, and virtual inspections save about an hour of travel, at least. These time savings can be invested in more physical inspections of other foodstuffs or basic products. (Virtual inspections) have only been implemented since July 5, 2021. Consequently, we are still collecting data to report any savings and efficiencies produced by them. Our goal is to carry out a review in 3-6 months to check the data and the results.

***In recent years have you detected any risks in your inspection system and in the control of agricultural imports?***

Yes, the African swine fever (ASF), Brown marmorated stink bug (BSMB), and Khapra beetle have been actual risks this last two years. We have implemented many control measures to manage the detection of those pests. There is a long list of pests and diseases that we do not want in our country. The BSMB and the Kaphra beetle are top on my list, and as of late I have been managing the detection of those pests (the Khapra beetle just this week).