



## The Belgian and EU policy on food and feed safety

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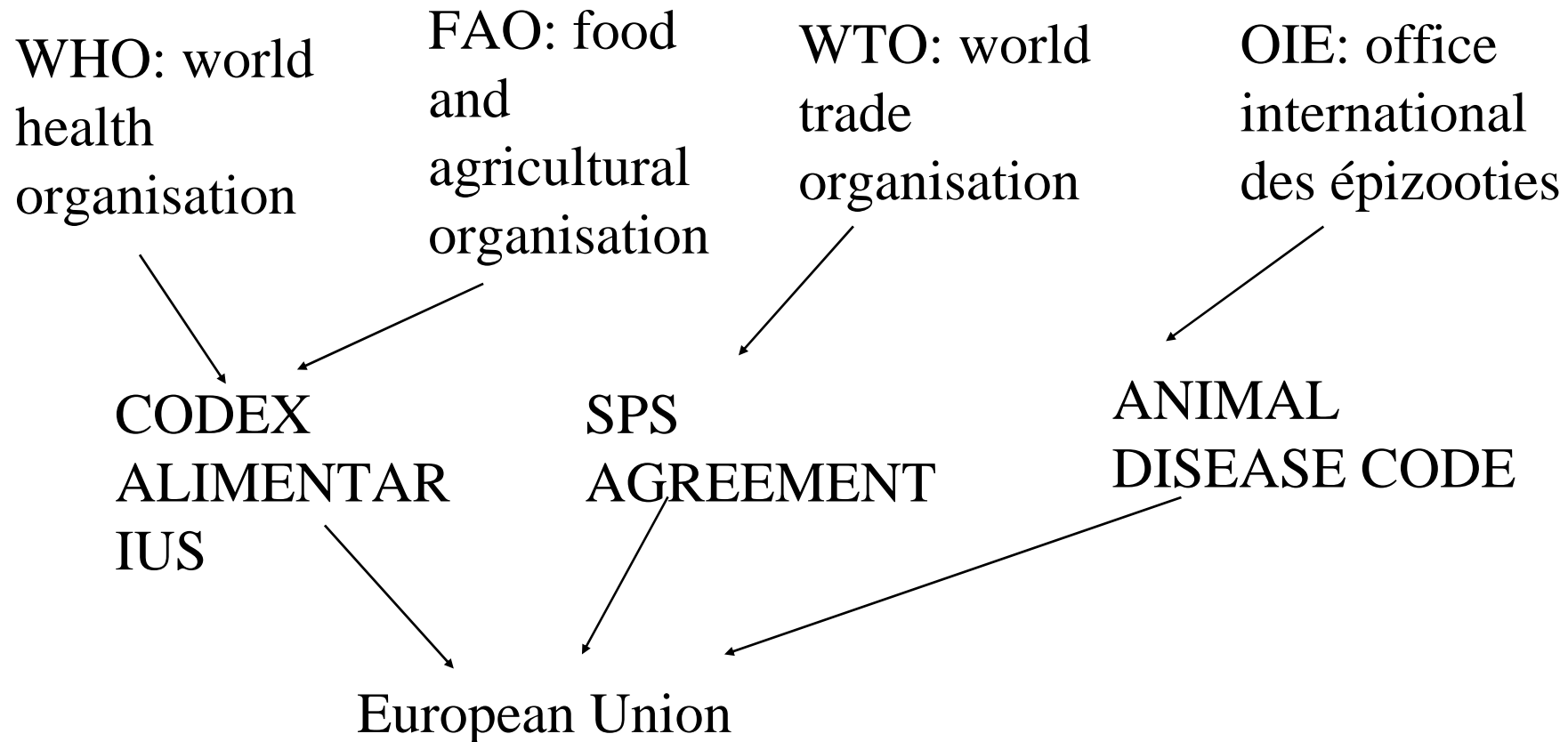
***Piet Vanthemsche***

***Vice chairman of the Boerenbond***

***EPP Congress 2007, Ghent, Belgium***



## A global framework





## Global references on food safety

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- Food: joint FAO/WHO codex alimentarius commission ([www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net))
- Animal health: international animal health organisation ([www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int))
- Plant health: international plant protection convention ([www.ippc.int](http://www.ippc.int))



## EU references

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- European food safety authority EFSA ([www.efsa.eu.int](http://www.efsa.eu.int)) = risk assessment
- DG Sanco ([www.europa.eu.int/comm/food](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food)) = risk management
- FVO ([www.europa.eu.int/comm/food](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food)) = control & inspection



## Evolutions in society

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- Technology and productivity versus sustainability: new priorities
- Complex production processes
- Taking into account consumer confidence and public perception



## Principles of EU food safety policy

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- Comprehensive approach of the agro food chain
- Responsibility (liability) of operators
- Traceability of feed, food and its ingredients
- Based on risk analysis (risk assessment, risk management, risk communication)
- Apply the precautionary principle where appropriate



## EU-Principles for official feed/food control

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- Integrated controls at all stages and in all sectors.
- Harmonised approach to the design and development of national feed and food control systems.
- Improvement of the efficiency of the Member State control services.
- Redefine role of industry



## A new relationship between producers and authorities

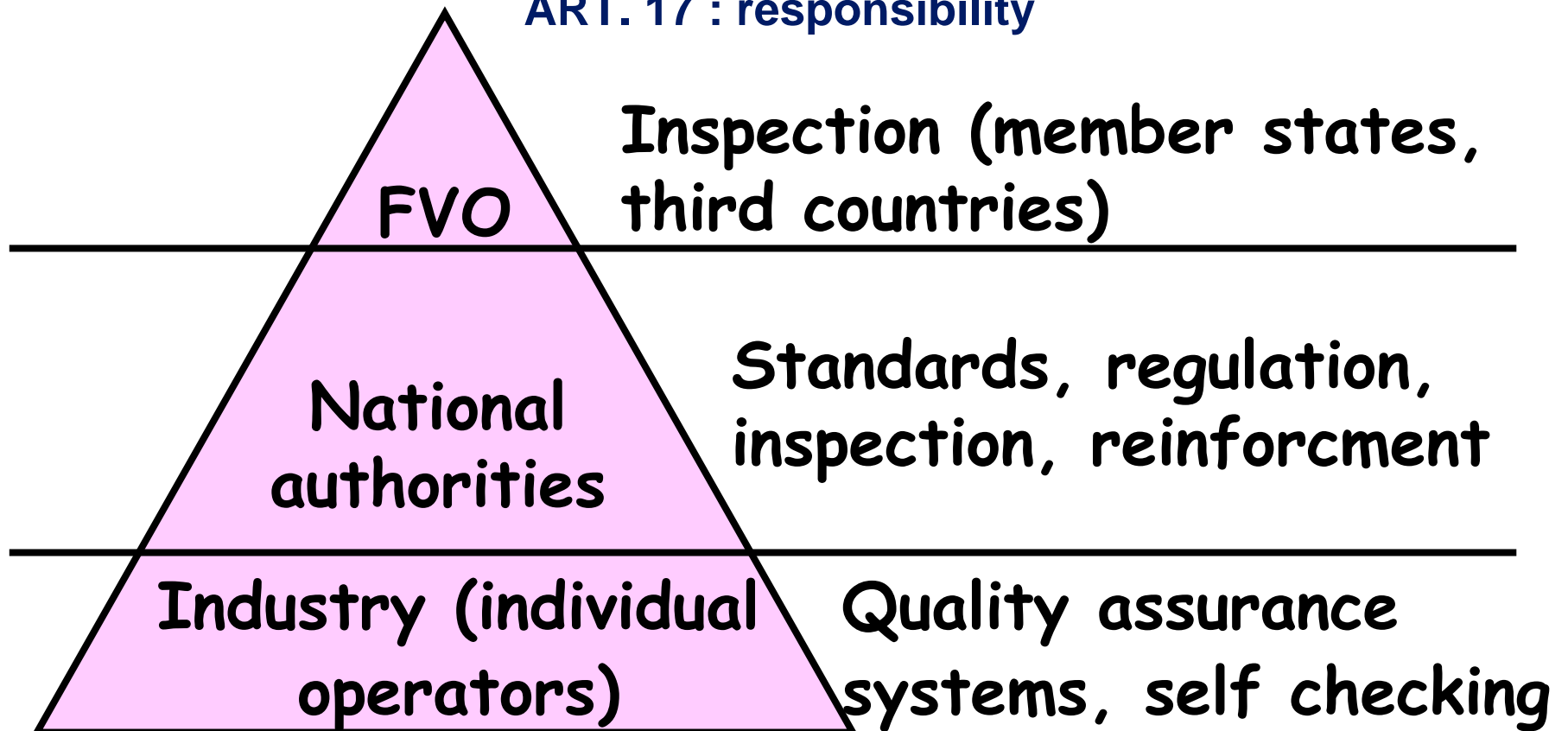
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- Food safety is a shared but well defined responsibility: who does what, who is *responsible*, who is *liable*?
- *Producers* are responsible for the quality and safety of feed and food.
- *The authorities* create standards and inspect (audit) production systems.



**FOOD LAW = REG. (CE) 178/2002**

**ART. 17 : responsibility**

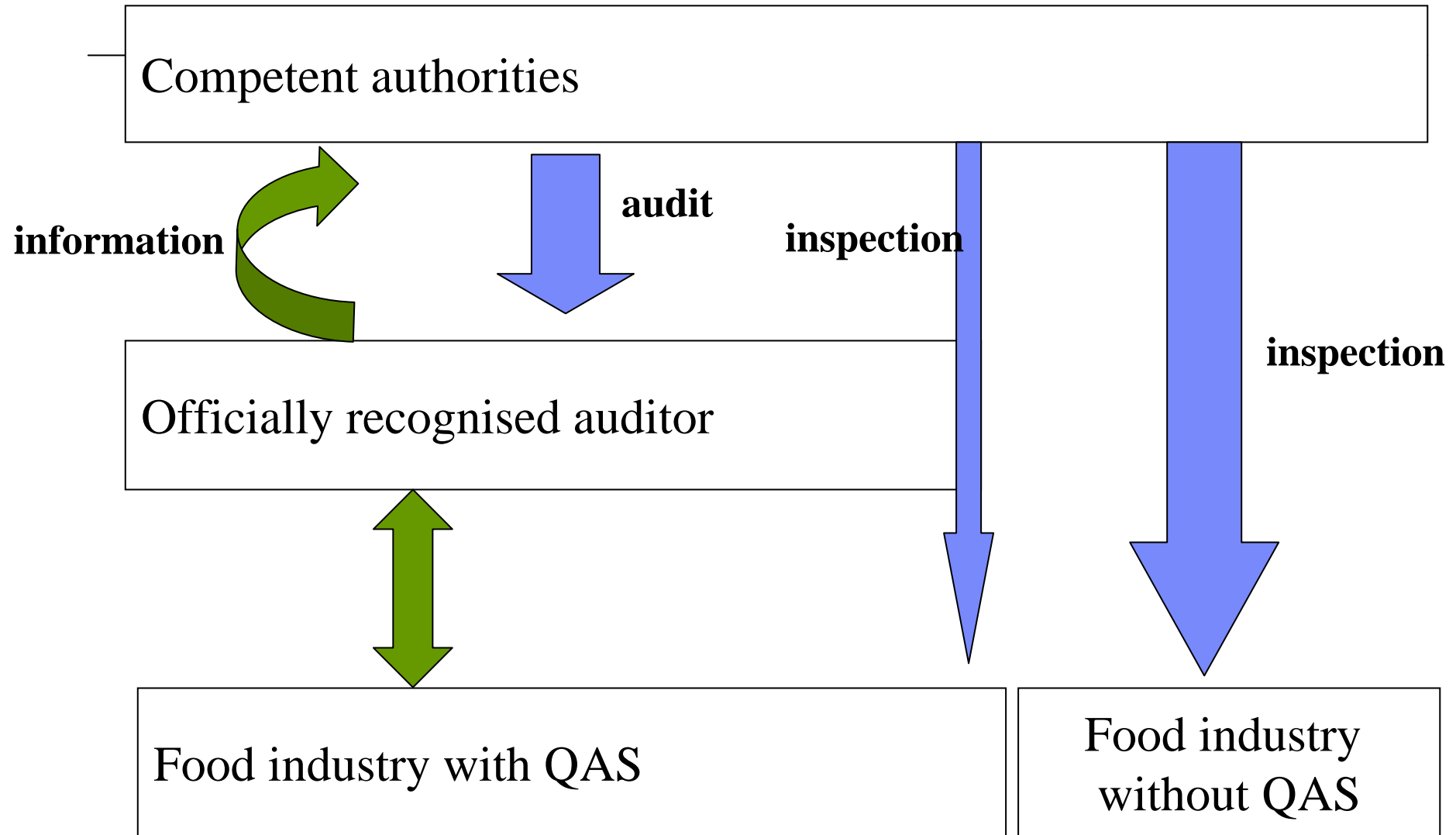




## Responsibility of producers: self-checking through quality assurance systems

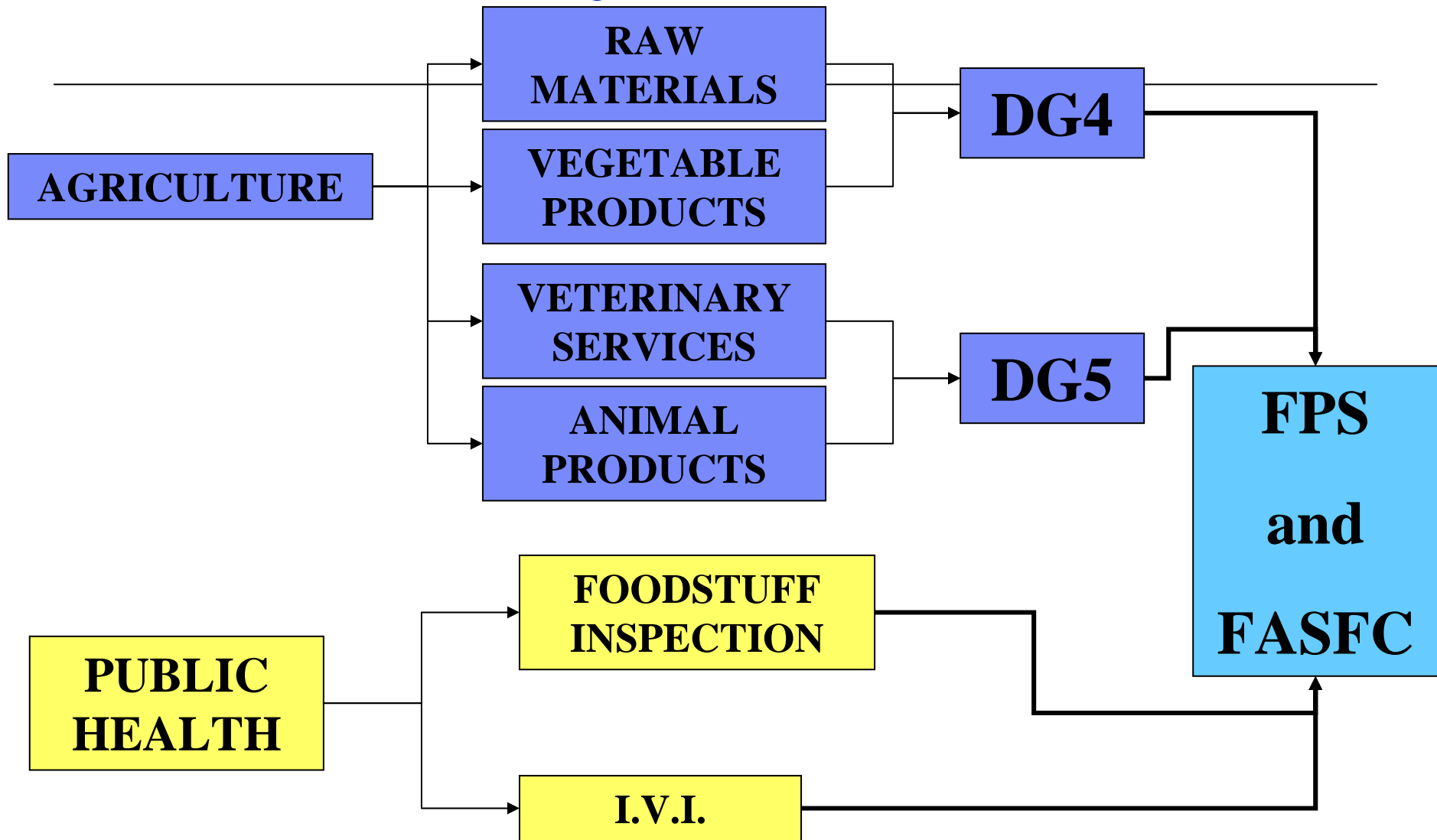
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- Manufacturers are responsible for the safety of their products
- On all levels of the agrofood chain: agrosupply, agriculture, food industry, retail
- Quality assurance systems are based on:
  - Documentation of the production process (ISO)
  - Monitoring of the safety of products (HACCP)
  - Independent audit



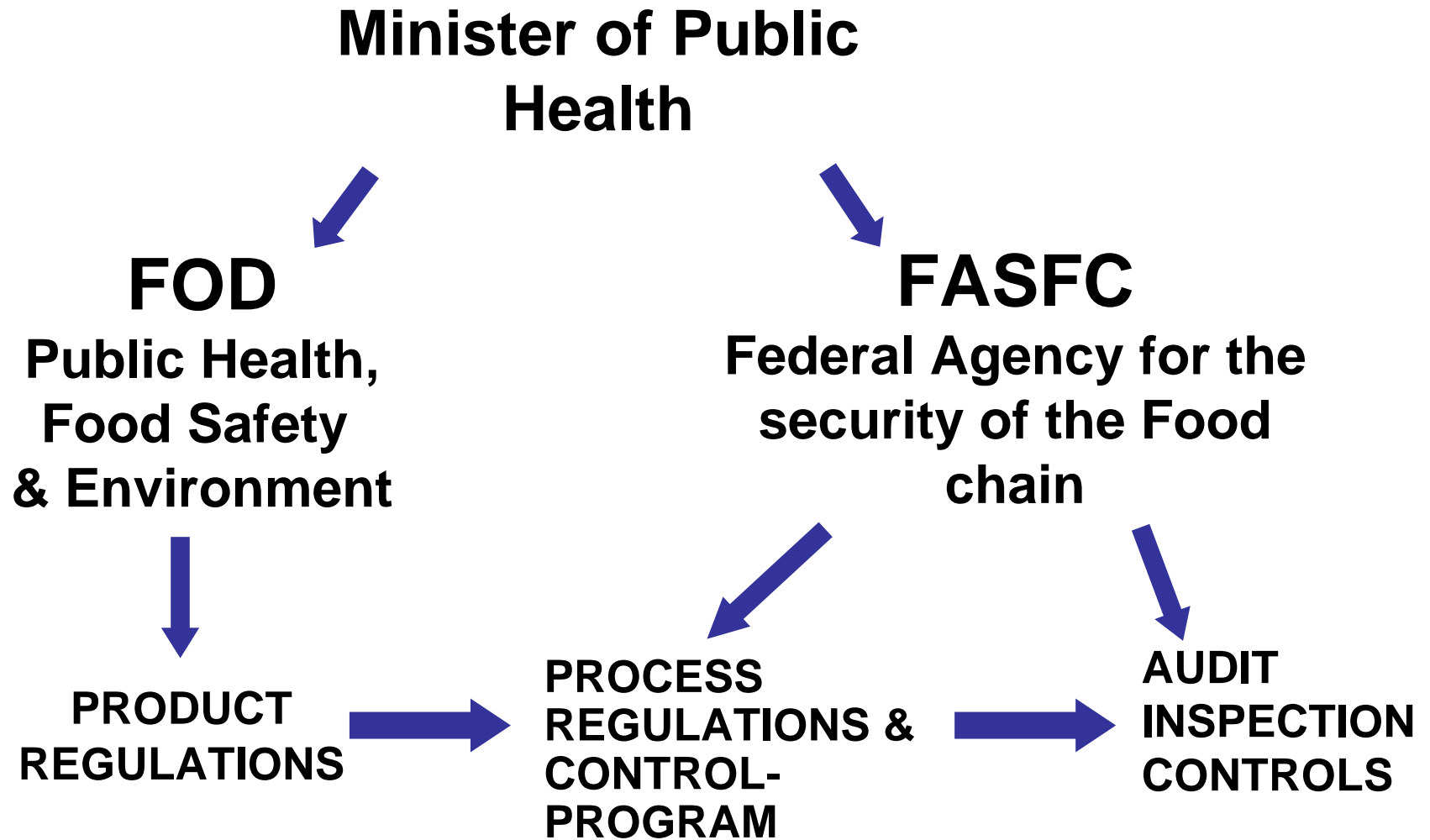


Previous situation in Belgium





The FASFC Food Agency is regrouping all the different control and inspection organisms since 2000





## The food safety agency

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- Executive agency: integrated inspection and control services
  
- Responsible for:
  - Surveillance of the food chain (products and processing)
  - Operational regulation
  - Identification and traceability
  - Prevention, sensibilisation, communication with consumers and industry
  - Laboratories



## A comprehensive approach

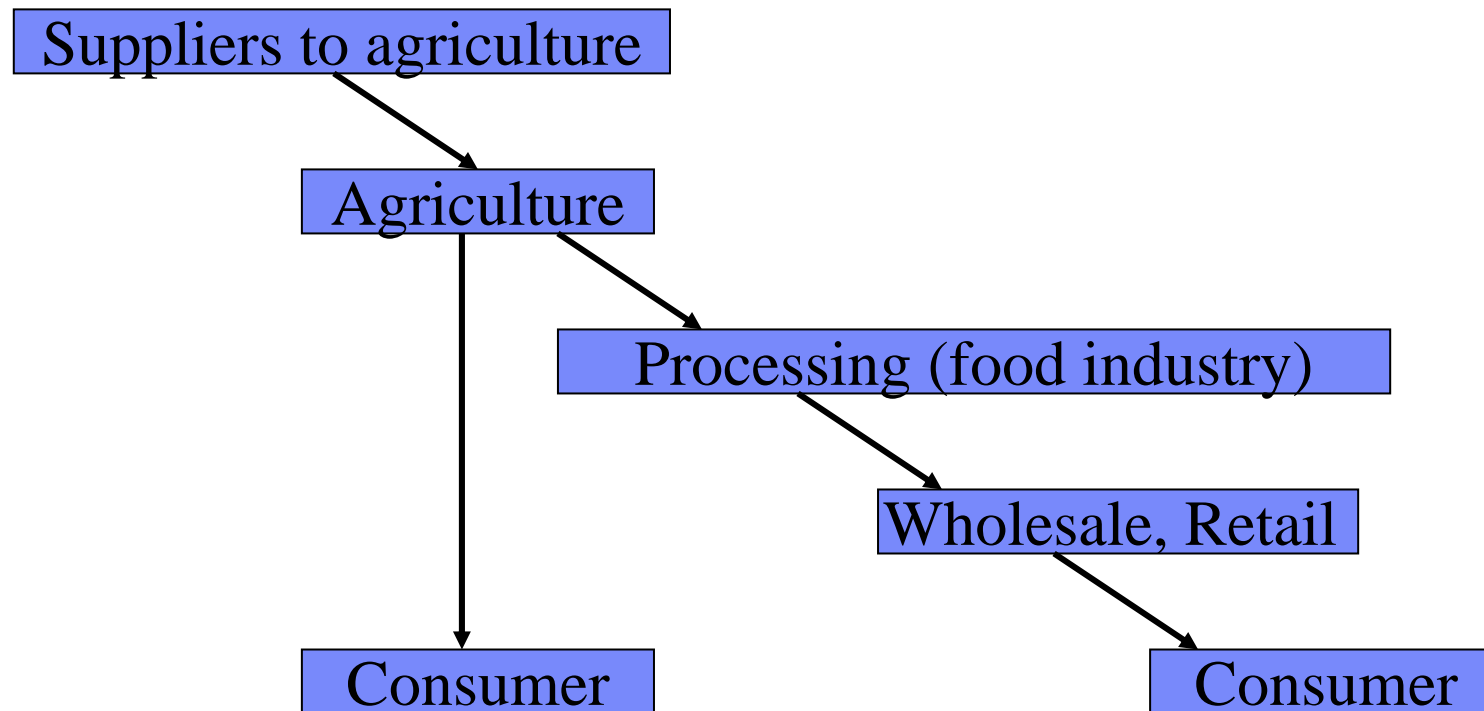
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- Entire Food Chain: from raw materials over animal feed, cereals, plants over animals, transformation of products and retail till the food on the plate
- Consumer oriented
- Risk analysis: a process consisting of three interconnected components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication



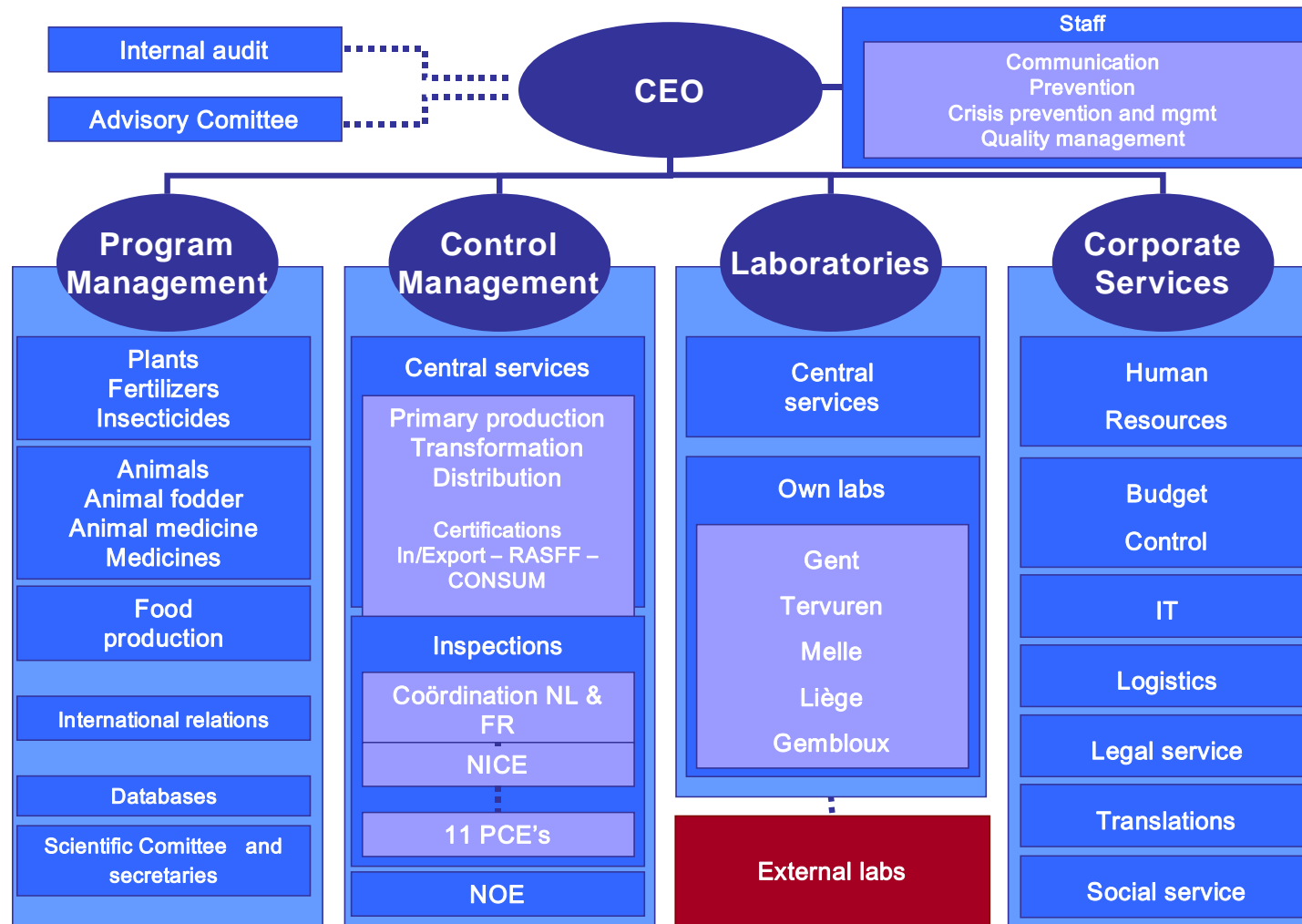
## The agrofood chain

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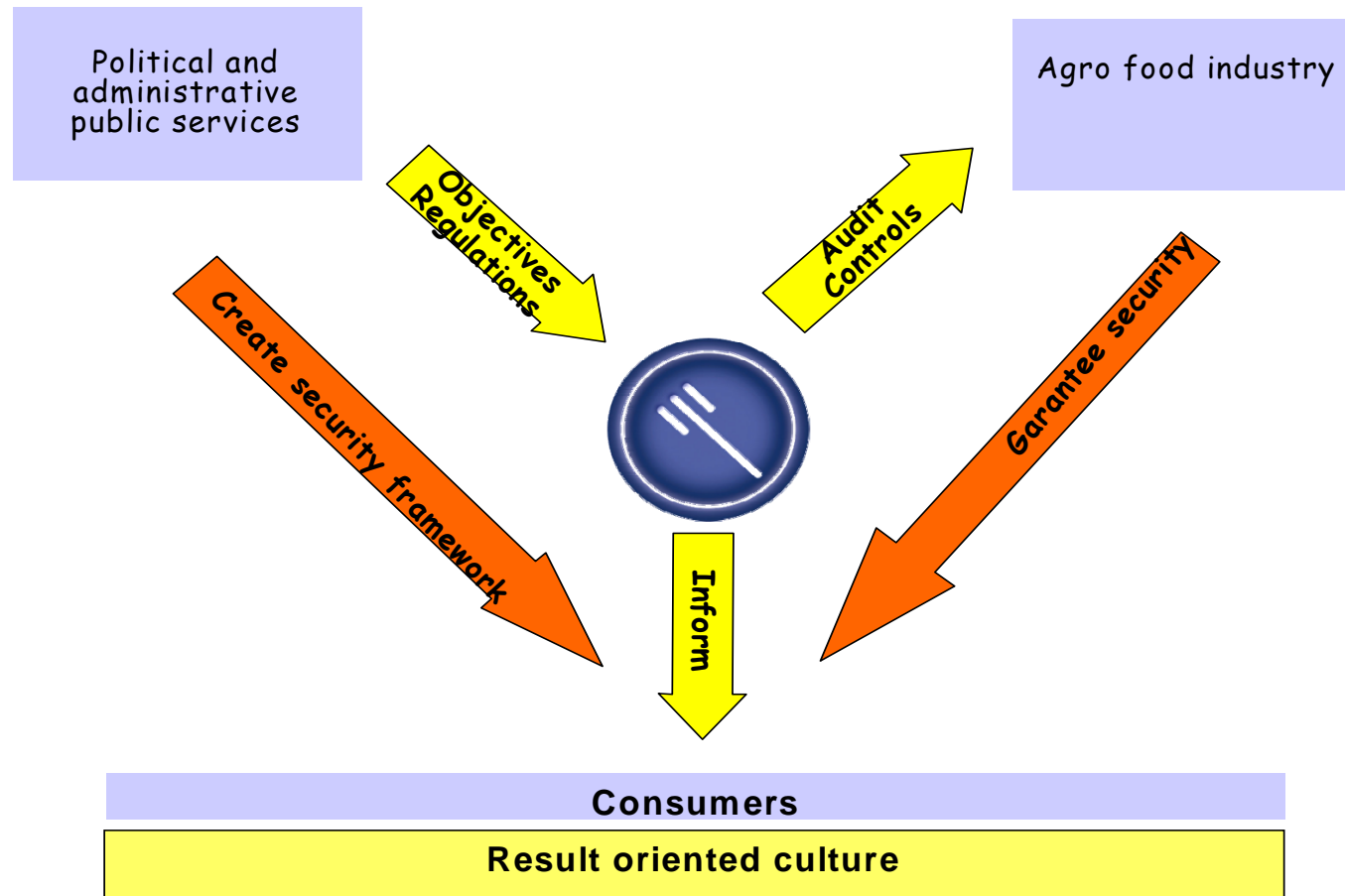


# The FASFC consists of central services for strategy, planning and support together with executing regional entities





# The FASFC must respond to the expectations of multiple stakeholders





## Collaboration with the stakeholders

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- The Agency's stakeholders are divided into 3 groups:
  - Sectoral organizations
  - Consumer organizations
  - Governemental bodies (federal and regional)which are all represented in the Advisory Committee (monthly meeting)
- The Advisory committee gives its advice for all important evolutions in the FASFC, and is informed of all results :
  - Risk analysis
  - Control programming and planning
  - Results statistics
- All stakeholders can view the inspection checklists on the Agency's website

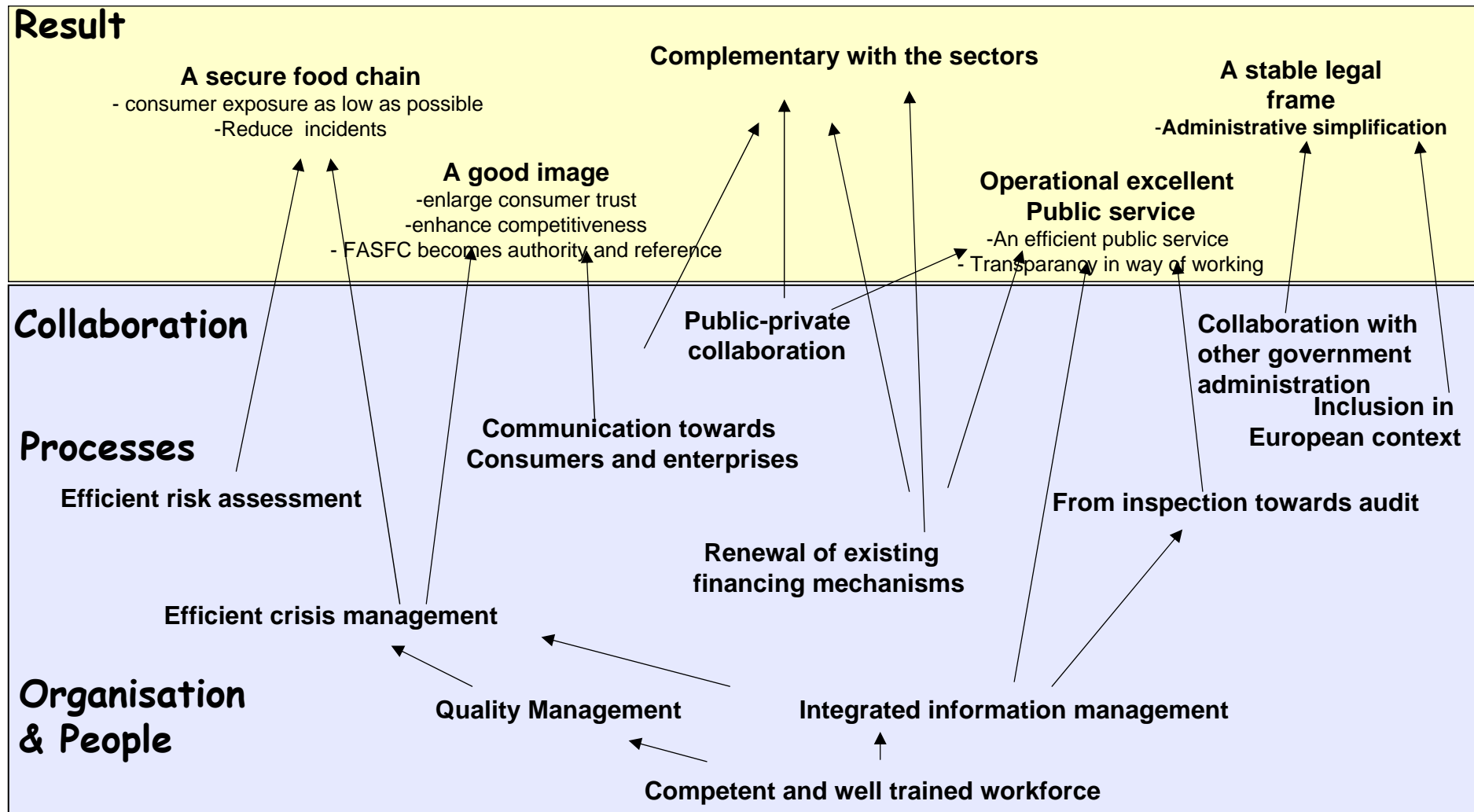


## In 2004 an internal analysis exercise together with an external stakeholder questionnaire resulted in a SWOT-analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principle of integrated approach</li> <li>▪ Use of controlprogram based on risk assessment</li> <li>▪ Open communication with consumers (e.g. Contact Point) and sectors</li> <li>▪ Own laboratories</li> <li>▪ Strong expertise and experience of the personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open relationship not with all sectors</li> <li>▪ Internal communication between management en people in the field</li> <li>▪ No Total Quality System – lack of uniformity</li> <li>▪ No integrated databases</li> <li>▪ Unsufficient audit competences with the employees in the field</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of certification bodies for the approvals of self assessments</li> <li>▪ E-government and administrative simplification offer opportunities towards consumers, sectors en companies</li> <li>▪ Win-win with sectors, in particular complementarity of FASFC-control activities with audits on self-assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own interests of stakeholders not always in line with FASFC-requirements</li> <li>▪ Implementation of self assessments is not evident for small enterprises</li> <li>▪ External (unpredicted) factors can endanger the normal functioning</li> <li>▪ Institutional context</li> </ul>



## The FASFC wants to add value in 5 areas that are supported by the selected strategic objectives





## These strategic objectives are translating the business vision into reality

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- From inspection to audit
  - Implementing self assessment
  - Attention towards education
- Communication
  - Different approach for each segment
  - Additional focus on small enterprises
- Quality Management
  - Internal Quality Management system
  - Certification
- Efficient risk assessment
  - Expand role of Scientific Committee
  - Better use of available databases
- Effective crisis management
  - Anticipation, fast reaction and continuity in the services



## The strategic objectives are translating the business vision into reality ... continued

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- Good collaboration with all other government authorities
  - Collaboration protocols and SLA's
  - Integration within European context
- Public Private Collaboration
  - OCI's, DMO's and Labs
- Integrated systems and information management
  - Process support through centrally validated data
  - Efficient reporting
- Competent employees
  - Expand training offering
  - Align personal goals with company goals
- Renew financing mechanisms
  - Levies and fees besides government budget



## The projected control plan towards the future is based on a number of assumptions

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- Import- and exportcertificates are not influenced by the expansion of the EU
- Agreements are delivered for an undetermined period
- Audits can be executed by private OCI's after approval of the sectorguide
  - Reduction for enterprises with a autocontrol system (ACS)
  - Combined audits of ACS with private request for proposals
- Pace of implementation of ACS in enterprises is difficult to predict
- 10 % of FASFC-controls require a follow up control



## A number of additional projects are needed to fulfil the realization of the strategic objectives

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- Communication
  - Mediacampaigns towards consumers
  - Announced controls with enterprises
  - Smiley for sales and distribution points
- Total Quality Management
  - Benchmarking and measurement system
  - Charter of the control agent
  - External ISO certification
- Human Resources
  - Additional staff training
  - Competence management
- Crisis management
  - 'notification room', 'preparedness plans', crisis management plans



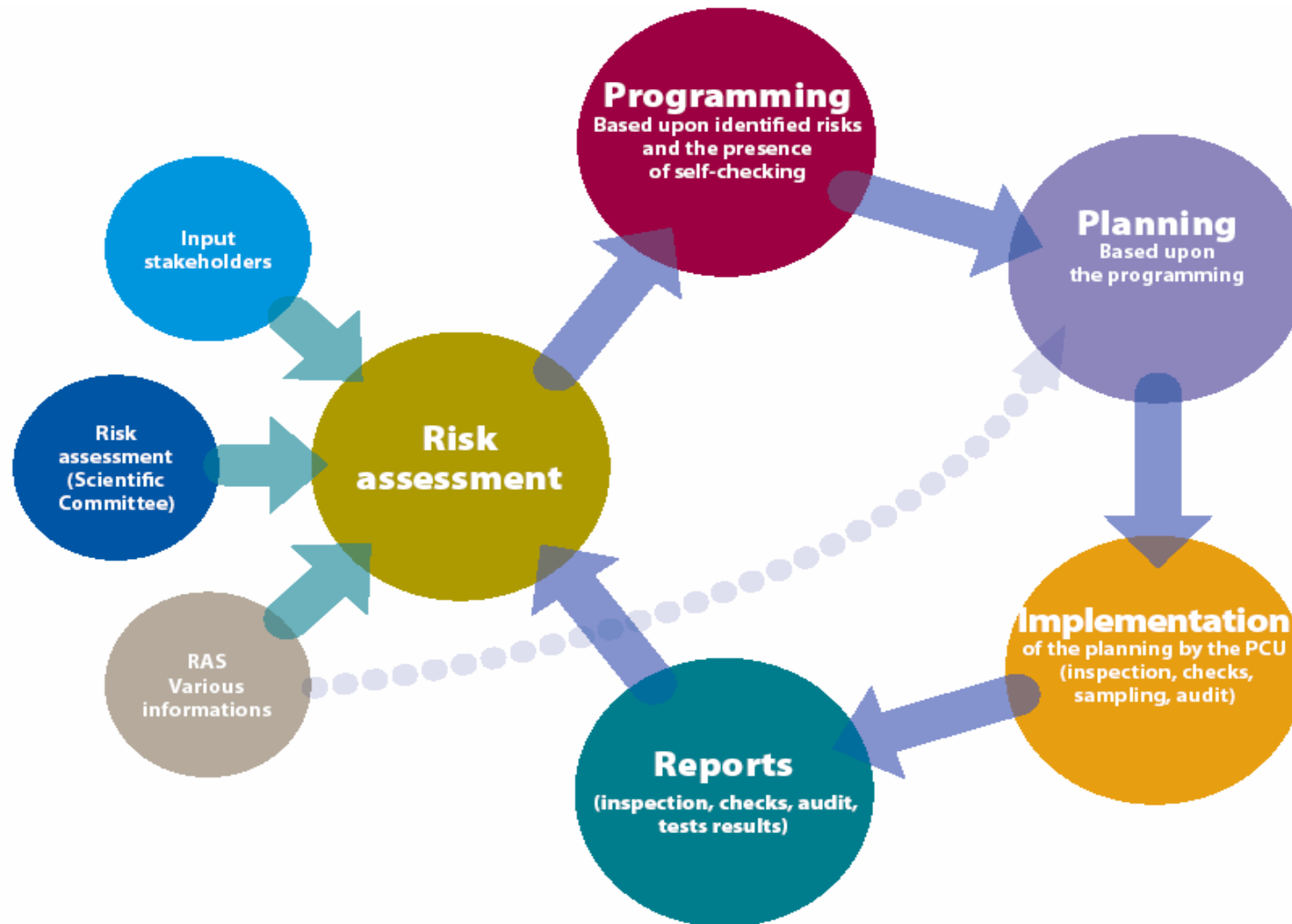
## Some figures

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- FASFC counts 1.300 FTE, 550 of whom work in the field and 160 in the laboratories of the agency
- Planning covers for about 70 % of all control activities
- Planning for 2005:
  - 66.124 sampling inspections
  - 152.034 physical and administrative inspections
  - goal = 100 % achievement



# The FASFC follows a yearly cycle of risk assessment, program development, execution and reporting





## Quantitative results of the planning process

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	Planned sampling	Realised sampling	Planned inspections	Realised inspections
2003				
2004	65.867	58.350	138.898	141.380
2005	66.124	67.105	152.034	167.069



## The budget remained at the same level over the last years

	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>INCOME</b>				
dotation	1.454.109	68.363.000	63.970.000	63.537.000
EU	0	5.487.203	5.500.000	4.026.000
own revenue	7.270	68.742.005	64.752.177	67.079.389
BSE revenue	0	7.307.716	5.049.000	20.852.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.461.379</b>	<b>149.899.924</b>	<b>139.271.177</b>	<b>155.494.389</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
total excl BSE	1.312.296	147.553.460	137.605.735	134.418.377
BSE	0	2.426.135	11.001.700	20.852.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.312.296</b>	<b>149.979.595</b>	<b>148.607.435</b>	<b>155.270.377</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>149.083</b>	<b>-79.671</b>	<b>-9.336.258</b>	<b>224.012</b>



## Positive experiences

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- Improved and structured working methods
- Motivated staff not resisting to change
- Improved quantitative follow up of activities
- Much more transparency towards the stakeholders
- Benchmarking is possible and put into practice
- Long term planning becomes possible