



What does FLEXIBILITY mean?

8th FACEnetwork annual meeting

Workshop, 27th November 2016

*QueRed · Red Española de Queserías de Campo y Artesanas
(Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese Dairies Spanish Network)*



WHO ARE WE?

OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN



REPRESENTATIVE OF CHEESEMAKERS



PROVISIONS ON FLEXIBILITY IN THE HYGIENE PACKAGE

FLEXIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF FOOD SAFETY BY ALTERNATIVE MEANS

DEPENDING ON THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

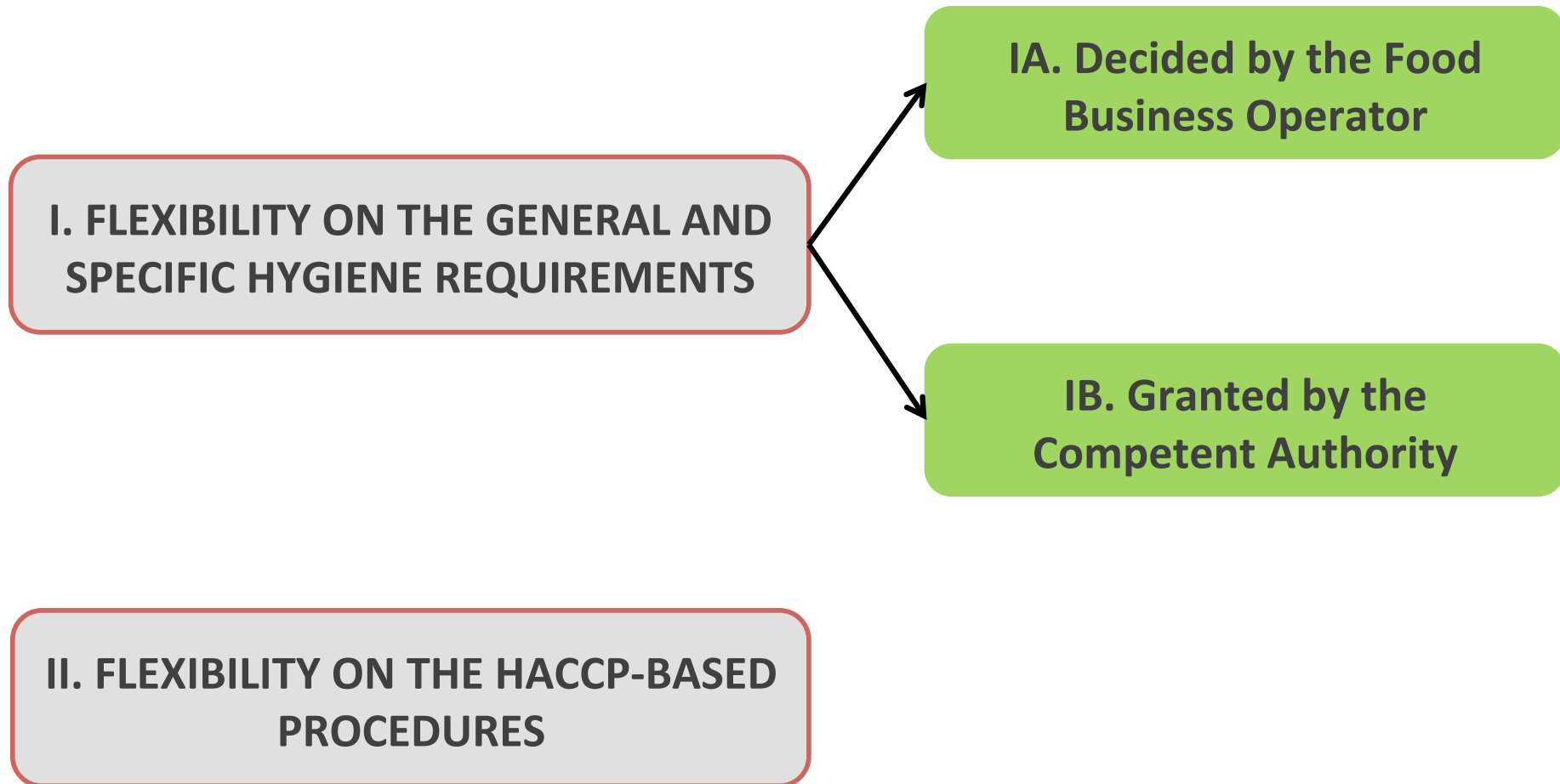
OF EVERY ESTABLISHMENT, REGION

OR FOODSTUFF





FLEXIBILITY AT TWO DIFFERENT LEVELS



I. FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

IA. Decided by the Food Business Operator

- ✓ ***Where the words “where necessary”, “where appropriate”, “adequate” or “sufficient”, are used, it is up to the FBO to decide whether a requirement is necessary, appropriate, adequate or sufficient to achieve the objectives.***

Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs

- ★ ***“Adequate working space to allow for the hygienic performance of all operations”***
- ★ ***“Storage conditions of sufficient capacity for maintaining foodstuffs at appropriate temperatures and designed to allow those temperatures to be monitored and, where necessary, recorded”***
- ★ ***“An adequate number of washbasins and, suitably located ”***
- ★ ***“Adequate facilities are to be provided, where necessary, for the cleaning, disinfecting and storage of working utensils and equipment ”***



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

Decided by the Food Business Operator

Right now, negotiating a document with 25 examples of interpretation, between the Spanish national authority and QueRed (the Spanish Network of Farmhouse and Cheemakers), addressed to Official Veterinarians and producers



aecosan
agencia española
de consumo,
seguridad alimentaria y nutrición

 **QUESERÍAS
DE CAMPO
Y ARTESANAS**
RED ESPAÑOLA



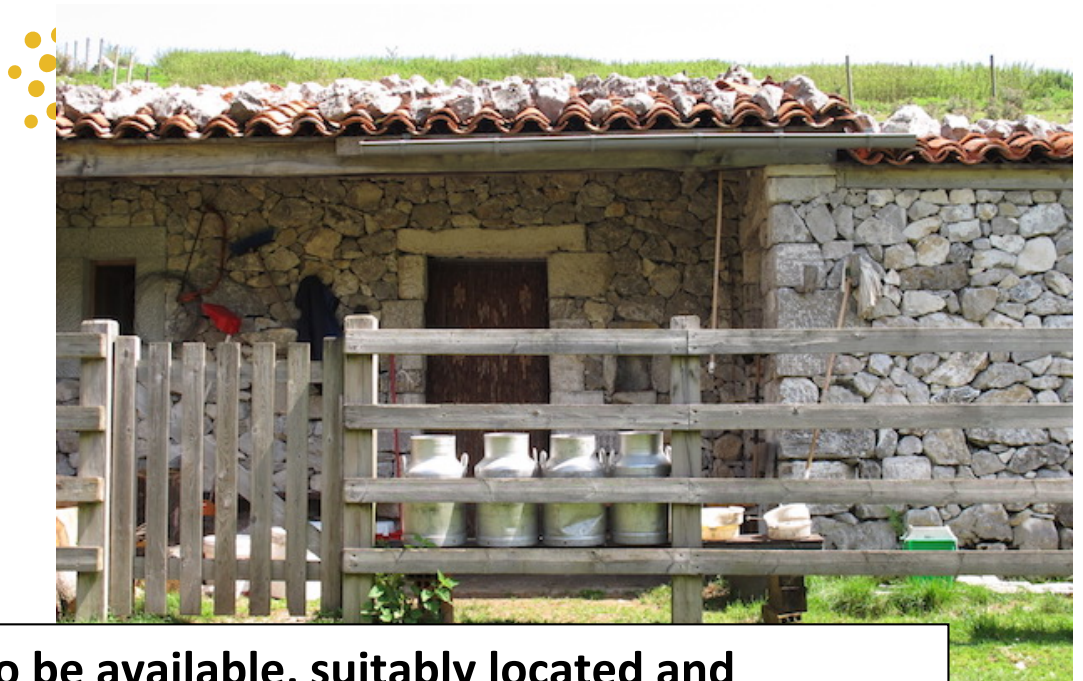


“Food premises are to provide adequate working space to allow for the hygienic performance of all operations” (Reg. No 852/2004)

QueRed proposal:

- *Several activities (manufacture, handling, packaging, labeling, etc.) can be made in the same room, provided that these are carried out separately, either in time or in space*
- *It's adequate the storage of cheese (packaged or not packaged), rennet, coagulants and cultures in the same cooling equipment, provided that the temperature required for each of them is met*
- *Ingredients and packaging material can be stored in a closet or other means located in the processing room or other separate room (the house of the producer), as long as the storage conditions are met (dry place, separate from chemicals, etc.)*





“An adequate number of washbasins is to be available, suitably located and designated for cleaning hands. Where necessary, the facilities for washing food are to be separate from the hand-washing facility. Adequate facilities are to be provided, where necessary, for the cleaning, disinfecting and storage of working utensils and equipment”. (Reg. No 852/2004)

QueRed proposal:

- It's sufficient the provision of a single water point for washing hands, tools and food. When washing cheeses, no other operation must be done.***
- Churns and other milk containers can be washed and dried on the outside of the dairy. The entrance of dirt and other contamination into these containers shall be prevented.***





“An adequate number of flush lavatories are to be available and connected to an effective drainage system” (Reg. No 852/2004)

QueRed proposal:

It's adequate if toilets are available at nearby facilities, as the cheesemaker's house, and all the workers have access to it





“During transport the cold chain must be maintained and, on arrival at the establishment of destination, the temperature of the milk and the colostrum must not be more than 10° C”. (Reg. No 853/2004)

QueRed proposal:

Should the raw milk must be transported from the farm to the cheese dairy, different types of receptacles suitable for food contact may be used . Isothermal tanks are often used but other containers can also achieve the objective. Transportation can be done by car, on foot, by bicycle, draft animal, etc.





I. FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

IB. Granted by the Competent Authority

DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

ADAPTATIONS

EXCLUSIONS



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

IB. Granted by the Competent Authority

DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

Food business operators are authorized to not apply specified requirements of the Hygiene Package in specified circumstances

These situations are usually introduced by wording, such as:

- ✓ *"if the competent authority so permits",*
- ✓ *"unless otherwise authorized by the competent authority",*
- ✓ *"with authorization of the competent authority", etc*

EXAMPLE:

- ✓ A Member State may, of its own initiative, maintain or establish national rules permitting the use, with the authorisation of the competent authority, of raw milk not meeting the criteria laid down in Annex III, Section IX, as regards plate count and somatic cell count of the manufacture of cheeses with an ageing or ripening period of at least 60 days.
(Reg. No. 853/2004, art. 10.8.a)



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

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DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

CHEESES WITH TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Reg. (EC) No. 2074/2005. art. 7

- 1** Premises where such products are exposed to an environment necessary for the part-development of their characteristics:
 - a) Walls, ceilings and doors that are not smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, or of corrosion-resistant material
 - b) Natural geological walls, ceilings and floors
 - c) Cleaning and disinfecting measures and the frequency carried out, shall be adapted to the activity, to take account of their specific ambient flora

- 2** Type of materials of which the instruments and the equipment for the preparation, packaging and wrapping of these products are made :
 - a) Not smooth, not corrosion-resistant
 - b) Maintained at all times in a satisfactory state of hygiene and regularly cleaned and disinfected



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IB. Granted by the Competent Authority

DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

CHEESES WITH TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Reg. (EC) No. 2074/2005. art. 7

For the purpose of this regulation, in the Member State in which they are traditionally manufactured, are:

- a) Recognised historically as traditional products, or
- b) Manufactured according to codified or registered technical references to the traditional process, or according to traditional production methods, or
- c) Protected as traditional food products by a Community, national, regional or local law.



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

Granted by the Competent Authority

DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

CHEESES WITH TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Reg. (EC) No. 2074/2005. art. 7

- ✓ **FARMHOUSE AND ARTISAN CHEESES AND DAIRY PRODUCTS** are food with traditional characteristics because they are manufactured according to traditional production methods
- ✓ **Specific derogations should be granted for all of them AT NATIONAL LEVEL (in the current framework) OR EVEN AT EUROPEAN LEVEL (in the future)**



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

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DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

CHEESES WITH TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Reg. (EC) No. 2074/2005. art. 7

A proposal from the Spanish Network of Farmhouse and Cheemakers,
to the Spanish national authority

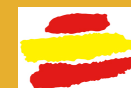


**1. Walls, floors,
ceilings, windows and
doors surfaces do not
need to be flat,
corrosion resistant or
water proof**





**Stone floor
and walls**



Natural cave



Wooden ceiling and door



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DEROGATIONS/EXEMPTIONS

CHEESES WITH TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Reg. (EC) No. 2074/2005. art. 7

A proposal from the Spanish Network of Farmhouse and Cheemakers,
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2. Equipment and materials for production and/or packaging do not need to be flat, easy to clean and corrosion resistant



Wooden material and equipment



Plant material as esparto matting, thatched shelves, straw, etc; leaves for covering, etc

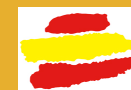


Stones for pressing





Copper equipment



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

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ADAPTATIONS

Member States may adopt national measures in order to adapt requirements laid down in Annex II (Reg. 852/2004) and III (Reg. 853/2004):

- a) To enable the continued use of traditional methods of production, processing or distribution of food, or
- b) To accommodate the needs of food businesses situated in regions that are subject to special geographic constraints
- c) In other cases, they shall apply only to the construction, layout and equipment of establishments

➤ A Member State may, of its own initiative, maintain or establish national rules prohibiting or restricting the placing on the market within its territory of raw milk or raw cream intended for direct human consumption

(Reg. No. 853/2004, art. 10.8.a)





QueRed · Red Española de Queserías de Campo y Artesanas
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FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

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EXCLUSIONS

The Hygiene Package excludes certain activities from its scope

Member States may authorize or not these activities with national rules

- ✓ **Cheeses sold entirely at the place of production or at a local market to final consumers,**

RETAIL

Excluded from Reg. 853/2004

Must comply:

- a) **Reg. 852/2004**
- b) **Only the requirements for raw milk of Reg. 853/2004**



FLEXIBILITY ON THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

Granted by the Competent Authority

EXCLUSIONS

This possibility is not interesting, ALSO for several reasons. The most important are:

- Cheese dairies **can sell at “local level”**, but cannot sell outside their region, but the rural areas have a low density of population, so **low density of consumers**.
- It exists a **increasing demand of our products in big cities** that are not always located at the “local level”.
- **Foods must be safe regardless of the selling method**. From a hygiene point of view, the difference on the level of requirements should only be based in the way of production, not in the route to market.
- **The European Regulations give many opportunities to small-scale businesses** through the wide range of possibilities of interpretation and through the development of exclusions and adaptation, **to stay under European Regulations and selling everywhere in Europe, as any other food industry**.



II.FLEXIBILITY ON THE HACCP-BASED PROCEDURES

- The HACCP methodology is flexible by its very nature
- *FBO doesn't have to ask for it*
- FBO is not compelled to comply with rules or to implement procedures not relevant or not adapted to the specific context for his activity

Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 On the hygiene of foodstuffs

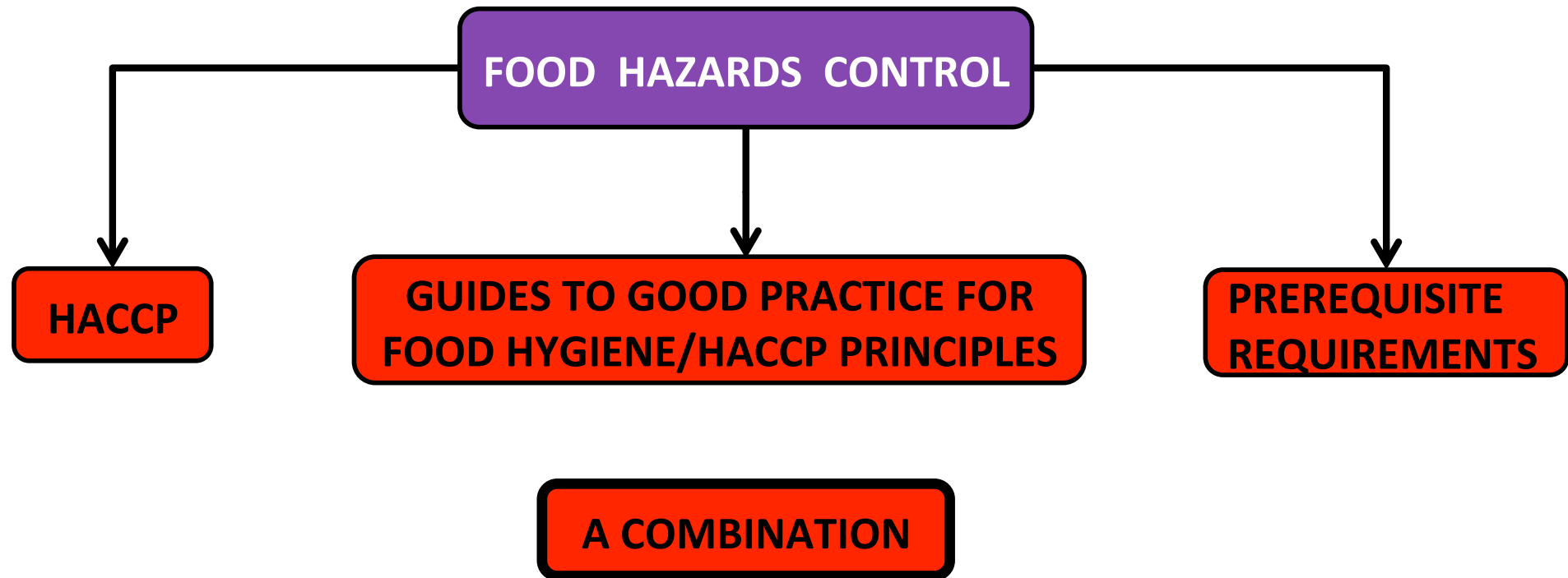
ALL FBO MUST

Put in place a system to identify and control significant hazards on a permanent basis and adapt that system whenever necessary

This can be done by different ways



II.FLEXIBILITY ON THE HACCP-BASED PROCEDURES



Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese and dairy producers' European Guide for Good Hygiene Practices
FACE NETWORK - QUERED

Farmhouse and
Artisan
Cheese & Dairy Producers
European Network

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WHAT ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF FLEXIBILITY PROCEDURES IN THE DIFFERENT MEMBER STATES?

[DG\(SANCO\)/2010-6150 - MR FINAL](#)

- Too much documentation: impossible to put in practice in small establishments
- Too many records to fill
- HACCP procedures that do not reflect the reality of the establishment: could have been replaced by guides
- Establishments showed more deficiencies where national measures for flexibility were not available

Recommendation:

- To introduce flexibility measures more widely and to encourage their implementation



WHAT ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF FLEXIBILITY PROCEDURES IN THE DIFFERENT MEMBER STATES?

[DG\(SANTE\) 2015-7752 – MR](#)

- Flexibility is the least understood HACCP concept and is inconsistently applied and evaluated.
- The implementation of flexibility varies across Member States and there is a lack of common understanding between and within Competent Authorities and those differences of interpretation may arise even between individual inspectors.
- Competent Authorities may not take account of GHP during official controls and small FBOs operating very simple systems based only on prerequisites, can find it difficult to convince the Competent Authorities that this approach is sufficient.
- A lack of understanding of flexibility results in small FBOs maintaining unnecessary documentation.



WHAT CAN BE DONE AT EUROPEAN LEVEL? OUR PROPOSAL

➤ **Creating a specific working group on flexibility, at the European level, led by DG SANTE, in order to:**

- a) **Assess the flexibility granted** in the application of the hygiene package in all Member States, **identifying where the lack of flexibility or poor implementation are hampering the development thereof.**
- b) **Identify those non conformities found by the official inspectors in the food businesses** of all Member States, which do not affect food safety and **could be resolved applying flexibility procedures** by the competent authorities.
- c) **Advise, assist and coordinate** the different **Competent Authorities** of Member States, for a **better and uniform development of flexibility procedures** in the hygiene package.
- d) Hold regular **meetings with representatives of small food industry, related professional organizations and NGOs**, to report on **progress made** on the application of flexibility, and **exchange opinions and proposals.**

WHAT CAN BE DONE AT NATIONAL LEVEL?

TWO KEY WORDS

TRAINING

Addressed to OV's on flexibility and traditional methods of food production



COMMUNICATION

Specific commission on flexibility with cheesemaker organisations and competent authorities





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ERASMUS + PROGRAM



CABILDO DE LANZAROTE



CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES
CIENTÍFICAS Y TECNOLÓGICAS
DE EXTREMADURA

¡THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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