

Food Market in Constanta County: ANSVSA Monitoring Actions in 2022 Summer Season*

Iuliana CONDULEȚ and Silviu STANCIU

"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania

Correspondence should be addressed to: Iuliana CONDULEȚ; iuliana.condulet@yahoo.com

* Presented at the 40th IBIMA International Conference, 23-24 November 2022, Seville, Spain

Copyright © 2022. Iuliana CONDULEȚ and Silviu STANCIU

Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the results of the monitoring and control actions of the food products sold as goods or services on the Romanian market during the 2022 summer season. The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority regularly carries out actions concerning the economic operators in the sector, in order to increase the level of food safety and reduce the level of the risk factors to the population's health. The study focused on the controls carried out in Constanța County, the coastal Black Sea area, which is characterized by a high influx of tourists during the summer season. The research revealed the fact that there are economic operators in the food sector who, even in the year 2022, do not comply with certain national legislative regulations on food products' safety and hygiene and consumer health's protection. The controls of the 2022 Summer Season Command, carried out between June 27 and August 28, 2022, achieved their main declared objective, i.e., to achieve zero food poisoning at the level of the consumers, but they revealed that there is still a lack of interest and awareness on the part of the economic operators evaluated. The results of the research show that it was necessary to impose penalties and seizures of non-compliant food products, in correlation with the volume of the thematic controls carried out and with the number of registered sanitary veterinary and food safety units assessed. The deviations from food products' quality detected as a result of the actions carried out by the relevant control bodies on the food market in Constanța have not been sporadic, being proportional to the frequency and number of controls. The legislation in Romania is consistent for any field of activity in the food sector, each economic operator being responsible for complying with these regulations, in order to protect the health of the final consumer. The analysis carried out is part of some doctoral research, whose main objective is food quality and the increase of the level of food products' safety on the Romanian market.

Keywords: Non-compliance, Measures, ANSVSA, 2022 Season

Introduction

According to the press release on the website of the Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate of Constanța, the launch of the 2022 Summer Season Command took place on June 27, 2022. Inspectors from the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority at central level and delegated inspectors from the county Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Directorates took part in the action. The conducted controls focused on the compliance with sanitary veterinary and food safety requirements regarding the production, processing, storage, transport and sale of food products (ANSVSA, 2022). Constanța County comprises three municipalities, eight towns/cities, fifty-nine communes and over ten tourist resorts. These resorts were divided into 7 control areas on criteria based on the number of food units, geographical area and position and number of tourists present. Specialized teams were set up for the seven areas of tourist interest: Mangalia, Costinești, Eforie Sud and Nord, Mamaia Sud, Centru and Nord and Năvodari (CJC, 2022). Each control team supervised, checked, advised, and applied the necessary measures to food operators, in order to ensure a high level of consumer protection. From the research carried out, 1,338 establishments were identified as being registered from a

sanitary veterinary and food safety perspective in DSVSA Constanța's inventory by August 28, 2022. The objects of activity of these establishments were: restaurant, brasserie, bistro, buffet, canteen, catering, confectionary labs, pastry labs, confectionary-pastry labs, pastry shop, confectionary, food shop, tourist boarding house, local gastronomic establishment, school camps, pizzerias, etc. Each series of inspectors carried out their activity in a specific area and for a period of two weeks. At the end of the 2022 Summer Season Command, the inspection teams supervised the units for a period of seven days.

Materials and Methods

This research is based on the European legislation, the national legislation in force on food hygiene and safety and the statements of the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority and of the Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate of Constanța. Press releases, publications, specialized journals, and media appearances contributed to the completion of this paper. Data were also extracted, processed, and represented from SCOPUS, ResearchGate, Clarivate Analytics, and Google Scholar databases.

Short Literature Review

At present, the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority and the counties' Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Directorates are operating under European and national law. The basis for food safety is provided by Reg. (EC) 178/2002, Reg. (EU) 625/ 2017, Reg. (EC) 852/2004, Reg. (EC) 853/2004, Reg. (EC) 854/2004, Reg. (EC) 1169/ 2011, Reg. (EC) 2073/ 2005, ANSVSA Orders No. 111/ 2008 and No. 35/ 2016, with the subsequent amendments and completions, G.D. 984/ 2005 and G.O. 2/2001, with the subsequent amendments and completions.

Stanciu and Sarbu (2015), in the paper *Resilience in the Romanian Food Industry. Preliminary Research*, noted the fact that in Romania there are critical food safety incidents in the agri-food sector, representing a cause for concern for the consumers, authorities and companies in the analyzed sector. The cited study concluded that there is a need for the surveillance of economic operators, their frequent counselling and the implementation of sanctioning measures when necessary.

The quality of the food products sold on the Romanian market is a current issue of utmost interest for the health of the population. Information on the existence of double production standards for food products destined for Eastern and Western European markets has been a matter of interest for the public authorities and consumers in Romania. The results of the research conducted by Stanciu (2015) highlighted the lack of technical expertise of the national authorities, a late and inadequate response to sensitive issues at European level in the field of food products' quality, also related to the discrepancies between the G15 and the rest of the countries. The increase in the number of food varieties sold on the Romanian market also led to the need for increased controls by the authorities (Stanciu et al, 2019; Stanciu, 2019).

The quality and integrity of Romanian food products in the agri-food chain is fundamental, as the sale of counterfeit agri-food products is harmful to both the consumer and to the Romanian state, as well as to the businesses operating in the sector, according to a World Bank study (2015). According to the results of the survey filled in by stakeholder representatives, following the discussions held during the results' analysis meeting, the hierarchy in terms of the responsibility of the public or private authority/body considered responsible for coordinating the regulatory process in order to develop the legislation and regulations on food integrity (safety, quality and authenticity of agri-food products) is ANSVSA (scoring 8.17/10), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (6.52/10), the National Authority for Consumer Protection (5.64/10) and the Ministry of Health (4.64/10). The implementation of the necessary control actions will also take into account the establishment of a public-public-private partnership, so as to efficiently capitalize on the use of the resources available for this activity.

Dobrescu (2020) presents the main legislative regulations and quality standards applied in Romania, by class of imported products, highlighting their correlation with the European legislative norms.

European Commission's reports (the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, 2022) show that the Member States have taken corrective measures/undertaken commitments to solve the deficiencies identified by the systematic controls carried out, within acceptable timeframes. Thus, the conclusions of the above-mentioned study show that corrective actions have been taken for 92% of the recommendations resulted from the audits carried out in the 2016-2018 period.

Ene and Matei (2006) show that in the pre-accession to the European Union period Romania faced a number of weaknesses, such as the insufficient level of investment in the agri-food sector, the uncoordinated public control activities, the insufficient training of the employees in the relevant public institutions, the lack of capacity of economic operators to be in line with the new European requirements, the inefficient communication between the institutions responsible for

coordinating food safety surveillance programs, the insufficient education and awareness of the population, therefore leading to difficulties in attaining the national objective of food safety.

Results

Figure 1 shows that the number of sanitary veterinary and food safety registered establishments has progressed since the opening of the Command. In the last period of control actions, it stagnated and reached 1,338. The number of thematic controls carried out in the first four series was similar, the difference being represented by series V, as it lasted one week. The measures taken by sanitary veterinary and food safety inspectors by means of penalties throughout the area of tourist interest reached 439. In the first two weeks, the inspectors applied 92 sanctions, in the following two weeks 84 sanctions were applied, 107 in the third series, 106 in the fourth series and 50 in the last week.

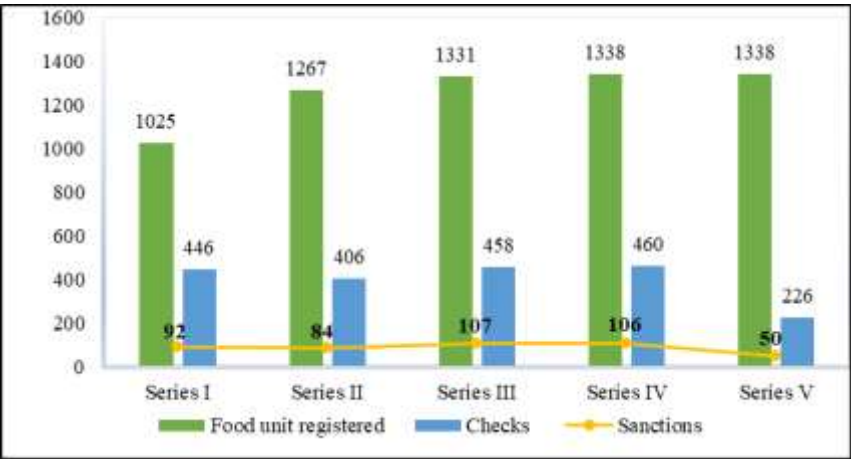


Fig. 1 : The Summer Season Command Analysis (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA data (2022)

Due to the fact that in the Năvodari area more than half of the establishments have permanent sanitary veterinary and food safety registration, which means that they operate and are supervised throughout the year, it can be seen in Figure 2 that the number of non-compliances encountered from June to August was 48. The number of units found in the DSVSA Constanța’s inventory in series I was 160, in series II - 174, and from series III up to the end 175 were identified.

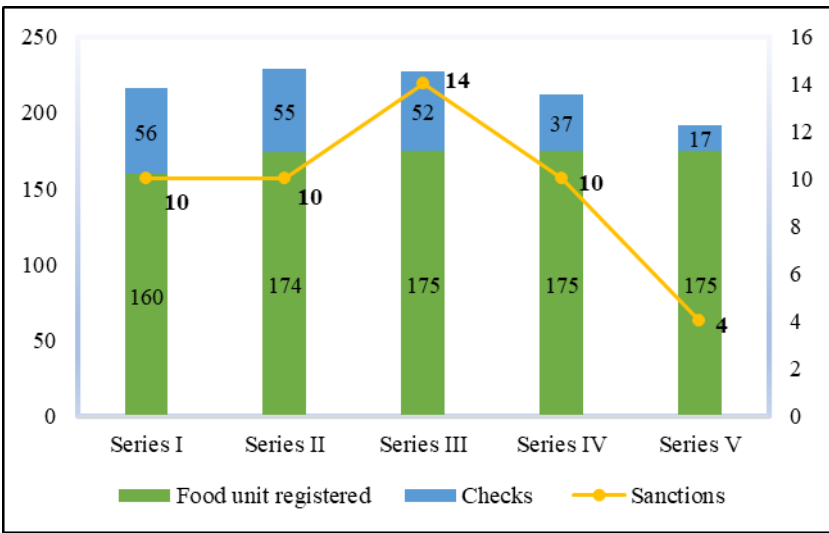


Fig. 2: Control actions in the Năvodari area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

Each area is unique in terms of the number of establishments, the number of tourists and the number of irregularities encountered. Figure no. 3, of the Mamaia Nord area, displays the constant number of active units, also due to their character. 220 control actions were carried out and 30 sanctions were imposed throughout the duration of the 2022 Summer Season Command.

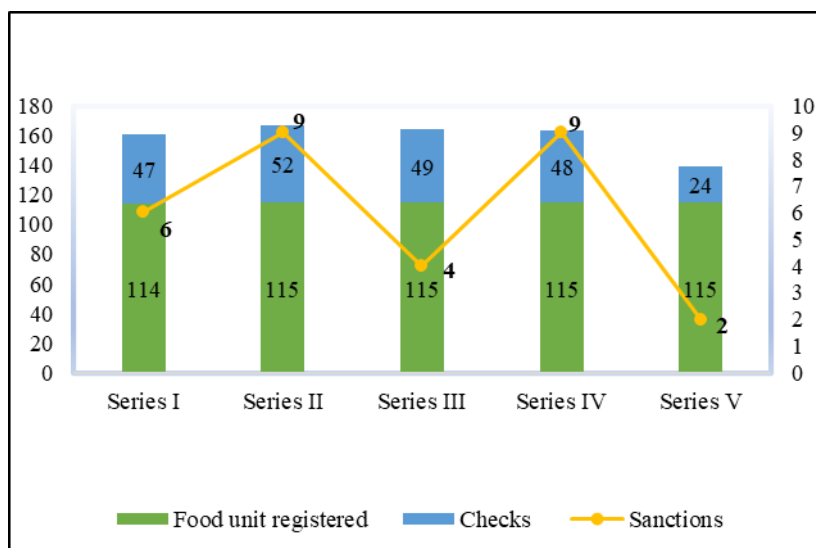


Fig. 3: Control actions in the Mamaia Nord area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

The Mamaia Centru area, shown in Figure 4, started with 40 units registered on June 27, 2022 and it reached 99 units registered on August 28, 2022. In series I, 45 checks were carried out and 6 sanctions were imposed. In series II 84 establishments were identified, 42 thematic actions were carried out and 7 fines were imposed. Series III was supplemented with a control team, in order to find out the real number of food establishments operating with or without registration and to protect the health of the final consumer. One can see that 99 registered establishments were identified, 70 were checked and 16 were sanctioned. The last two series carried out 44 control actions and applied 7 legislative measures for the non-compliances encountered.

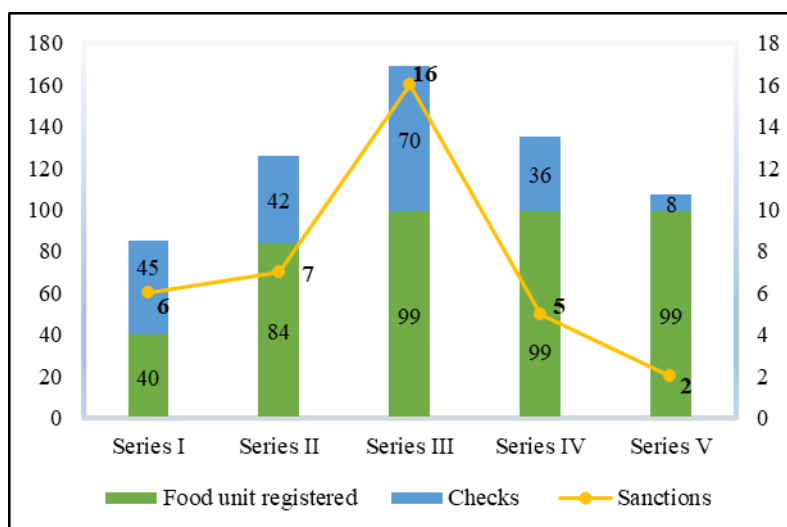


Fig. 4 Control actions in the Mamaia Centru area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

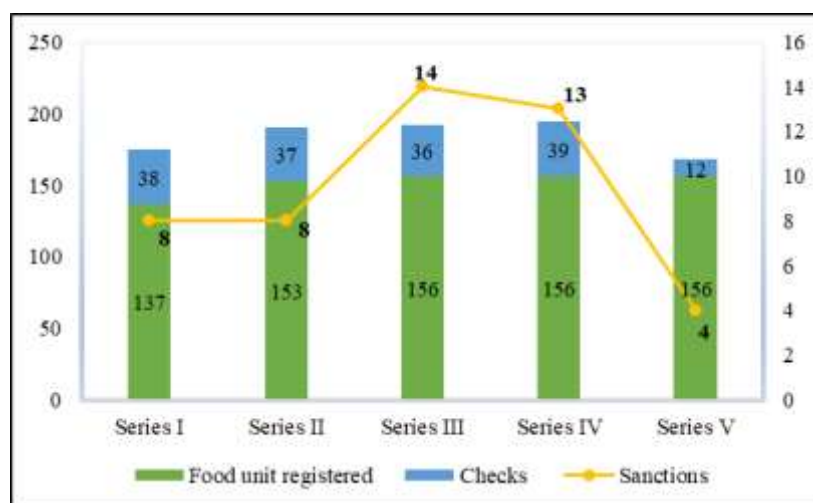


Fig. 5 Control actions in the Mamaia Sud area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

Figure 5 shows that the number of registered sanitary veterinary and food safety establishments started from 137 and reached 156. Official controls were relatively constant, ranging between 36 and 39 in the first four series and reaching 12 in the last series. The sanctions imposed in the Mamaia Sud area were: 8, 8, 14, 13, 4 for each series. In the area of the Official Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety District of Costinești area there is also something distinctive, given that the activity in this area is, in more than half of the cases, seasonal. It started with 204 active units, and it reached 328 at the end of the actions. Due to the large number of tourists in Schitu locality, Costinești Resort, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud and Techirghiol, in addition to the two teams of inspectors delegated to supervise the Costinești, respectively Eforie areas, another team was delegated to help them in terms of preventing food poisoning and protecting consumer health. A total of 136 checks were carried out in series I and 13 fines were imposed. In series II there were 123 actions and 16 fines. In series III there were 144 thematic controls and 22 sanctions. In Series IV 147 establishments were checked and 41 sanctions were imposed. Series V recorded 85 official checks and 24 fines (Figure 6).

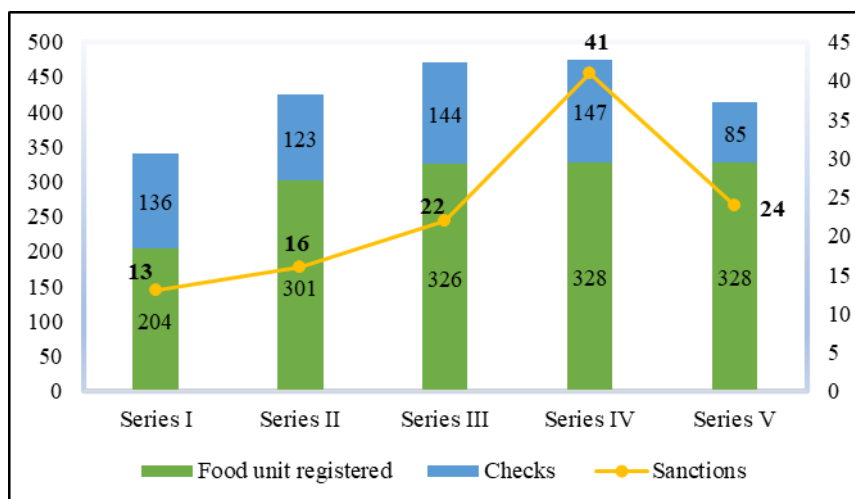


Fig. 6 Control actions in the Costinești area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

Figure 7 shows the activity of the Official Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety District of Mangalia spread over two areas comprising more than 5 tourist resorts. In the first week of the Command, 380 units were found and in the last week - 465. The number of official controls was 105 in series I, 90 in series II, 91 in series III, 145 in series IV and 80 in series V. The total number of sanctions imposed by the sanitary veterinary and food safety inspectors was 117.

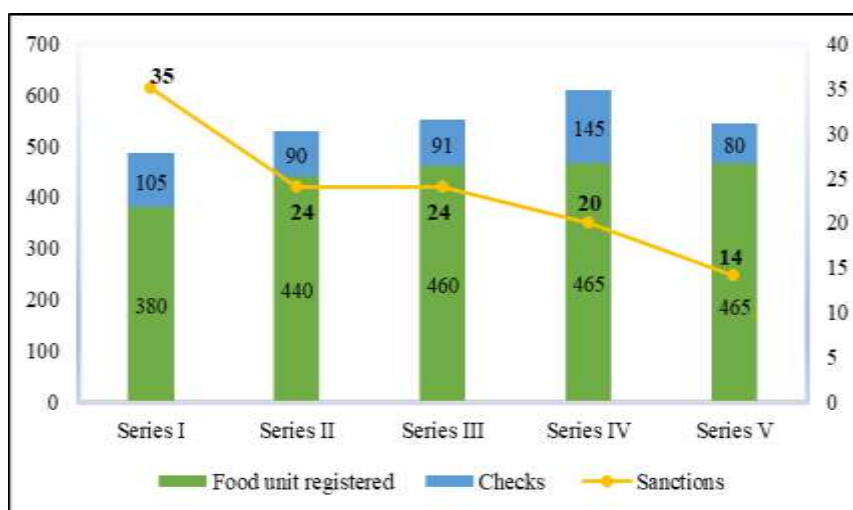


Fig. 7 Control actions in the Mangalia area (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

The final audit of the measures applied according to the legislation in force for the 2022 Summer Season Command can be viewed in Figure 8. 394 fines were imposed, 54 of which being for operating in premises which were not approved / registered for sanitary veterinary and food safety purposes. 58 penalties were imposed for improper handling of food products. Most of these were for unsatisfactory hygiene conditions, 98 in total. Improper storage was detected in 75 establishments. For failure to ensure traceability, 48 measures were taken.

According to G.D. 984/ 2005, the sanctions are classified according to different articles, letters, and points. The article 4 letter a point 1 deals with the deficiencies related to carrying out the activity in unapproved/unregistered sanitary veterinary premises, point 2 deals with the improper handling of food products by the employed staff, point 5 deals with the deficiencies related to the hygiene of the premises, utensils, equipment, etc., point 6 represents the non-compliant labelling, point 8 the improper storage, and article 4, letter d represents the selling of food products with an expired shelf life. Article 6 letter a point 10 indicates the non-compliances related to the failure to ensure the traceability of food products. Article 7 identifies the deficiencies related to utensils and containers in a deteriorated condition, unapproved additives and dyes used in the manufacturing process, storage and transport without keeping the food products in compliance with the criteria of compatibility, according to Figure 8.

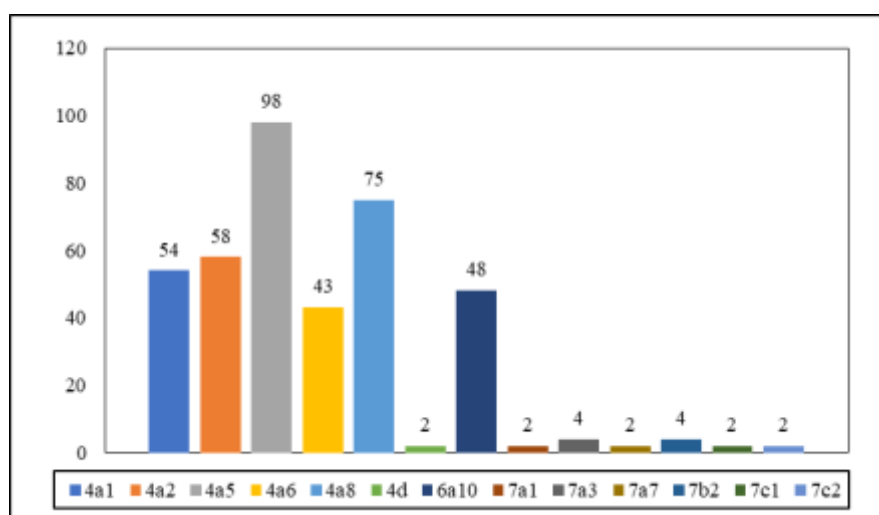


Fig. 8 The sanctions imposed during the Summer Season Command (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

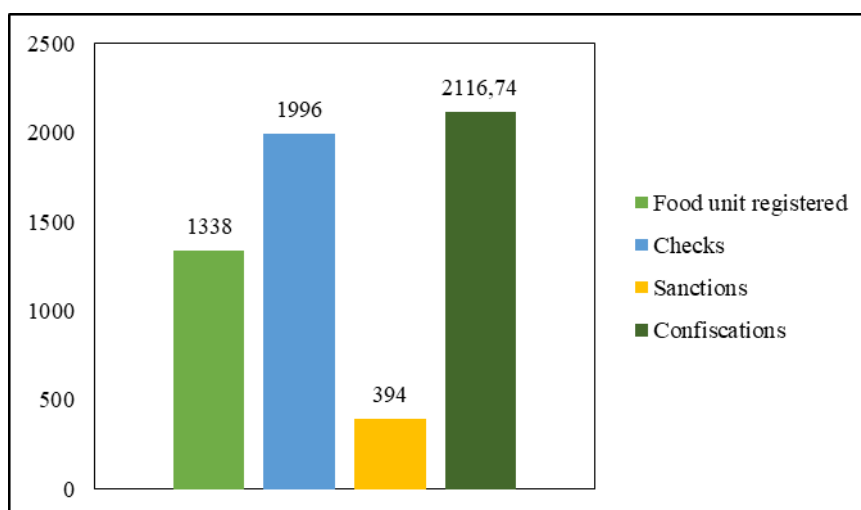


Fig. 9 The audit of the Summer Season Command (2022)

Source: Drafted by the author based on DSVSA Constanța and ANSVSA reports (2022)

Figure 9 shows the activity carried out by the sanitary veterinary and food safety inspectors during the June 27, 2022 – August 28, 2022 period of the 2022 Summer Season Command. The final audit demonstrates that there were 1,338 establishments registered with DSVSA Constanța in the areas of tourist interest within the county and 1,996 thematic controls were carried out. Within the 1,996 official checks, deviations from the legislation in force were encountered and 394 sanctions were imposed, while 2,116.74 kg of food products unfit for consumer safety were confiscated.

Conclusions

This paper shows the fact that the sanitary veterinary and food safety inspectors of ANSVSA and the counties' DSVSA have achieved the objective set at the time of the launch of the 2022 Summer Season Command, namely to ensure a high level of protection and zero food poisoning in the year 2022 for the tourists visiting the Romanian coastline and for the local residents. The research demonstrates the fact that each representative of a food business is directly responsible for the implementation of the legislative measures in force relating to food hygiene and safety and consumer health protection. From the data analyzed and presented in this paper, it can be argued that the number of control teams was adequate in relation to the areas of tourist interest, and that they carried out their work in accordance with the legislation in force and applied the necessary measures in the cases of deviations from the legal requirements of food products. According to the June 27, 2022 inventory, there were 1,025 active permanent or seasonal units. Following the checks carried out by the Command's inspectors, 1,338 units, registered on August 28, 2022, were identified. Thus, it can be concluded that the sanitary veterinary and food safety inspectors have achieved their objectives. A total of 394 sanctions were imposed for poor hygiene conditions, improper storage, failure to ensure the traceability of the products, selling of food products with an expired shelf life, carrying out activities in premises which were not registered for sanitary veterinary purposes, etc., amounting to 4,075,800 lei. 2,116.74 kg of food products of animal and non-animal origin unfit for human consumption, such as fish, pork, minced meat, chicken meat, grilled minced meat rolls/"mici", meat paste, salad, etc. were seized and sent to waste collection companies for neutralization by incineration. One Prohibition of activity order and four Temporary suspension of activity orders were issued.

References

- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2011), Ordinul ANSVSA nr. 111 din 16 decembrie 2008 privind aprobarea Normei sanitare veterinare și pentru siguranța alimentelor privind procedura de înregistrare sanitară veterinară și pentru siguranța alimentelor a activităților, [online], Available: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/101005>, accessed 07.11.2022.
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Lansarea Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/30161/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Rezultatele primei săptămâni de activitate a inspectorilor Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/rezultatele-primei-saptamani-de-activitate-a-inspectorilor-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Rezultatele celei de-a doua săptămâni de activitate a inspectorilor Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 [online], Available:

<http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/rezultatele-celei-de-a-doua-saptamani-de-activitate-a-inspectorilor-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022

- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Bilanțul Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 în perioada 27.06-18.07.2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/bilanțul-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022-in-perioada-27-06-18-07-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Bilanțul Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 în perioada 27.06-24.07.2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/bilanțul-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022-in-perioada-27-06-24-07-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Bilanțul Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 în perioada 27.06-31.07.2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/bilanțul-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022-in-perioada-27-06-31-07-2022-2/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Bilanțul Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 în perioada 27.06-08.08.2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/bilanțul-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022-in-perioada-27-06-08-08-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Autoritatea Națională Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor, (2022), Bilanțul final al Comandamentului Sezonului Estival 2022 [online], Available: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/bilanțul-final-al-comandamentului-sezon-estival-2022/>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Consiliul Județean Constanța, (2022), Județul Constanța [online], Available: [Judetul Constanta | Consiliul Județean Constanta \(cjc.ro\)](http://www.cjc.ro/), accessed 07.11.2022
- Consiliul Județean Constanța, (2022), Primăriile din județ [online], Available: [Primariile din judet | Consiliul Județean Constanta \(cjc.ro\)](http://www.cjc.ro/), accessed 07.11.2022
- Consiliul Județean Constanța, (2022), Propunere Dezvoltare Durabilă 2021-2027 [online], Available: http://www.cjc.ro/dyn_img/Strategie_jud.Cta/Propunere_Strategie_Dezvoltare_Durabila_Jud.Constanta_2021-2027.pdf, accessed 05.11.2022.
- Dobrescu, M, (2020), Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards. Country Report, U.S. Embassy Bucharest's Office of Agricultural Affairs for exporters of U.S (approved By: Jonn Slette), [online], Available https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Country%20Report_Bucharest_Romania_12-31-2019, accessed 07.11.2022.
- Ene, C., Matei, M., (2006), New Dimensions of Food Security in Romania from the European Perspective, [online], Available <https://www.econstor.eu/obitstream/10419/76851/1/749368993.pdf>, accessed 07.11.2022.
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, (2022), Report from the Commission on the overall operation of official controls carried out in Member States (2019-2020) to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022,), [online], Available <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2875/00980>, accessed 07.11.2022.
- European Parliament, 2004 a, Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption, [online], Available: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02004R0854-20150101&from=ES>, accessed 05.11.2022.
- European Parliament, 2004 b, Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, [online], Available: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2004R0852:20090420:RO:PDF>, accessed 05.11.2022
- European Parliament, 2004 c, Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, [online], Available: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02004R0853-20100101&from=LV>, accessed 05.11.2022
- Guvernul României, (2001), Ordonanța Guvernului nr. 2 din 12 iulie 2001 privind regimul juridic al contravențiilor, aprobată cu modificări și completări prin Legea nr. 180/2002, cu modificările și completările ulterioare, [online], Available: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/29779>, accessed 07.11.2022
- Guvernul României, (2005), Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 984 din 25.05.2005 privind stabilirea și sancționarea contravențiilor la normele sanitare veterinare și pentru siguranța alimentelor, [online], Available: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/64844>, accessed 07.11.2022.
- Stanciu, S., Sârbu, R., (2015), Resilience in the Romanian Food Industry. Preliminary Research, Economics and Applied Informatics, "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, issue 3, pages 69-74. [online], Available: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/ddj/fseeai/y2015i3p69-74.html>, accessed 07.11.2022.
- Stanciu, S., (2017), Food Quality in Romania Compliant or Not with Food Quality in Western Europe, Proceedings RCE 2017, Editura Lumen, vol. 0, pages 383-396, Handle: RePEc:lum:progal:v::y:2017:i::p:383-396, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.rce2017.1.34>

- Stanciu, S., Virlanuta, F.O., Vochin, O.A., Ionescu, R.V., Antohi, V.M., (2019), Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Market in Romania Features and Trends, *Amfiteatru Economic*, 21/Special Issue 13, pp. 778-794, DOI: 10.24818/EA/2019/S13/778.
- Stanciu, S., (2019), Quality of Romanian Food Products in Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed Notifications, *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Nutrition and Food Engineering*, 13(2), pp. 34-37,