

**Question for written answer E-002172/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**

Subject: Food safety checks following the horsemeat lasagne scandal

On 8 February 2013 it was revealed that horsemeat had been discovered in lasagne marketed in the UK by global food-processing giant Findus; the products in question were supposed to contain only beef. In the light of this scandal, it is more important than ever to restore consumer confidence in the food supply chain.

As an MEP and member of Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and also as a consumer, I believe that it is now more essential than ever to step up checks at all stages of the supply chain.

In its White Paper on food safety (COM(1999)0719) published on 12 January 2000, the Commission said that recent food safety crises had revealed shortcomings in national control systems, and shown that the lack of a harmonised approach to the design and development of these systems was at the heart of the problem. The White paper envisaged a Community framework of national control systems, which would improve the quality of controls at Community level, and consequently raise food safety standards across the European Union (though the operation of the systems would remain a national competence). The paper clearly states that the Commission carries out a programme of audits and inspections, through the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), to ensure that these control systems are effective. These controls evaluate the performance of national authorities against their ability to deliver and operate effective control systems, and are supported by visits to individual premises to verify that acceptable standards are actually being met.

What progress has been made with the audits and inspections announced by the Commission? How many audits and inspections has the Commission conducted since the white paper was published? What were the results? Will it carry out another audit in the light of the recent horsemeat lasagne scandal?