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LAW NO. 2000/017 OF 19 DECEMBER 2000 TO REGULATE VETERINARY HEALTH INSPECTION

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**The National Assembly deliberated and adopted, the President of
The Republic hereby enacts the law set out below:**

Article 1:

This law shall determine the powers and duties and conditions of functioning of veterinary health inspection services in Cameroon.

Chapter I

VETERINARY HEALTH INSPECTION

Article 2:

Veterinary health inspection shall constitute all measures taken, as concerns animals, animal and halieutic products and their by-products, within and outside the national territory as well as at the borders ((import and export), to ensure that food products are fit for consumption.

The health inspection of products shall consist in the following measures:

- (1) the hygienic control of products with a view to their consumption, sale or processing;
- (2) the hygienic control of their preservation, storage, distribution, transport and processing conditions;
- (3) the control of their compliance with presentation and packaging norms;
- (4) the classification of products in categories according to their organoleptic qualities and their degree of wholesomeness.

Article 3:

Veterinary health inspection services shall also ensure the protection of consumers and persons handling animal and halieutic products against zoonoses, poisoning and all other infections of animal origin, in accordance with instruments governing public health.

They shall also contribute to the protection of the environment.

Article 4:

No food product of animal or halieutic origin may be sold for consumption if it has not been the subject of a veterinary health inspection.

Article 5:

Such veterinary health inspection shall be undertaken by a sworn and qualified official of the veterinary services.

Article 6:

Food products of animal or halieutic origin which after veterinary health inspection are found neither to meet the accepted standards of hygiene nor the required marketable quality shall be seized, denatured, destroyed, downgraded or turned back as the case may be.

Article 7:

Veterinary health inspectors shall conduct protective seizures pending the results of analysis of the suspected food products.

Article 8:

Statutory instruments shall lay down the conditions under which the veterinary health inspection operations stipulated in Section 2 above shall be carried out.

Article 9:

A health certificate or health pass shall be issued after a veterinary health inspection.

Article 10:

- (1) The inspection operations shall entail the payment of a service tax the rate of which shall be fixed by the finance law.
- (2) A decree of the Prime Minister shall lay down the conditions governing the collection of this tax.

Chapter II

PROTECTION AGAINST ZONOSSES AND ANTHROPOZONOSSES

Article 11:

The following diseases shall be deemed to be zoonoses, anthroponozoonoses, infections, poisonings and serious infestations:

- (1) rabies in all species;
- (2) tuberculosis and pseudotuberculosis in all species;
- (3) anthrax in equines, swine and ruminants;
- (4) brucellosis in bovines, small ruminants and swine;
- (5) pasteurellosis;
- (6) erysipelothrix;
- (7) listerellosis;
- (8) vibriosis in ruminants ;
- (9) salmonellosis ;
- (10) teniasis ;
- (11) trichinosis;
- (12) toxoplasmosis ;
- (13) distomiasis ;
- (14) sarcosporidiosis
- (15) intestinal myiasis
- (16) shigellosis ;
- (17) clamydiosis ;
- (18) Q fever ;
- (19) ornithosis in birds,

- (20) psittacosis;
- (21) leptospirosis;
- (22) clostridiosis;
- (23) echinococcosis;
- (24) bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

Article 12:

The list of the diseases cited above may be supplemented by joint order of the minister in charge of veterinary services and the minister in charge of public health with new diseases likely to constitute a human health hazard.

Article 13:

The following shall be subject to mandatory declaration:

- any animal which is, or is suspected of, suffering from zoonoses or anthroponoses;
- any by-products or substitutes of animal or halieutic origin likely to spread disease germs and poisoning or to upset the eventual consumer.

Article 14:

The conditions for the treatment, immunization and destruction of animals which are, or are suspected to be, sick shall be laid down by order of the minister in charge of veterinary services.

Article 15:

The cost of handling, denaturing, destruction or recovery shall, except in special circumstances, be borne by the owners.

Article 16:

In the case of industrial improvement of products seized (processing industries), the conditions of covering the cost of handling spoiled products and disinfecting storage facilities and of using the proceeds of their sale shall be laid down by regulations.

Article 17 :

The conditions under which the owners of animals which are, or are suspected to be, infected may be required to comply with measures necessary for preventing or combating a disease shall be laid down by regulations

Article 18 :

Any person practising the profession of stock-breeder, butcher, pork-butcher, fishmonger, wholesale fish merchant or processor of dairy products, or required by his profession to handle food products of animal or halieutic origin intended for public consumption or sale, must undergo annual medical check-ups which shall be certified by the issue of a medical certificate drawn up by an approved medical officer. The said certificate shall be presented when requested by officers in charge of veterinary health inspection.

PENALTIES

Article 19:

- (1) Sworn officials of the veterinary health inspection services shall be empowered, in case of offences against the provisions of this law or those of its implementation instruments, to produce a report which shall serve as evidence unless there is proof to the contrary. This report shall be submitted to the State Counsel of the place at which the offence was committed.
- (2) The sworn official of the veterinary health inspection service empowered to collect fines shall be appointed by the minister in charge of finance, on the proposal of the minister in charge of veterinary health inspection.

Article 20:

- (1) A prison sentence of 1 (one) to 3 (three) years and a fine of v from 50 000 CFA francs to 5 000 000 CFA francs shall be imposed on whomever:
 - (a) fails to file in the compulsory report provided for in Section 13 above;
 - (b) refrains from the obligations or impedes the execution of the measures prescribed by the veterinary authorities responsible for the treatment, immunization and destruction of animals which are, or are suspected to be, infected by disease, as well as for the control of the fitness of animal or halieutic products marketed whether or not they are from such animals; the penalties shall be doubled where such acts are accompanied by violence or insult;
 - (c) sells, allows the sale of or recovers for their own consumption;
 - fish, crustaceans and other sea products which are rotten or contaminated;
 - meat or canned food items impounded during inspection drives and which are intended to be destroyed;
 - (d) milk products and honey known to be unfit for consumption,
 - (e) imports or exports animals, animal or halieutic products or the by-products thereof without the health certificates or passes provided for in Section 9 above, or the technical reports issued by competent officials of veterinary services.
- (2) In the case of a repeat offence, the court may forbid the offender to continue to practise the profession, in accordance with Section 36 of the Penal Code.
- (3) No reprieve whatsoever shall be granted to offenders in respect of the penalties provided for in Section 20 (1) above.

Article 21:

- (1) In addition to the penalties provided for in Section 20 above, animals, fish, crustaceans and (other) sea products, milk products, honey, meat and meat substitutes found in areas where their distribution is prohibited shall be seized.
- (2) The conditions for denaturing, destroying or salvaging impounded items shall be defined by regulations.

Article 22 :

Notwithstanding the disciplinary sanctions to which they may be liable, sworn officials of veterinary health inspection services shall be punished with the penalties provided for in Section 20 above:

- where they allow the sale of food items listed in Section 20 (c) above;
- where they fail to comply with the provisions of Section 21 above, or are guilty of misappropriation of funds or of allowing the development of impounded items

Chapter IV

MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 23:

All previous provisions of Law No. 75/13 of 8 December 1975 to regulate veterinary health inspection are hereby repealed.

Article 24:

This law shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and in French.

Yaounde, 19 December 2000

Paul Biya
President of the Republic