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## 'Horsegate' one year on: EU promises fall flat

One year after it was revealed horsemeat had been sold as beef in readymade lasagne, questions remain as to the pace at which the EU converts words of reassurance into deeds.

In response to the large-scale fraud promises were made of enhanced control and penalty measures to prevent a repeat and ensure genuine food authenticity, which was the crux of the horsemeat scandal.

The European Commission published its commitments in an [Action Plan](#) in March 2013. Apart from testing, the three main measures are either on hold or still in debate. See our [special timeline](#) for more information.

<b>Testing samples:</b> results published in April 2013	
<b>More unannounced controls and higher fines:</b> Being debated at the European Parliament and Council	<b>Awaiting</b>
<b>Tackling food fraud:</b> 'Food Fraud Network' and IT alert tool	<b>Awaiting</b>
<b>Origin labelling for processed meat:</b> Being compromised as the Commission's <a href="#">report</a> stacks arguments against.	

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation, commented:

"The horsemeat scandal was a wake-up call, one which put food fraud on Europe's radar. These incidents were only the latest in a long line, which shows the current system is too permissive.

"The measures announced by the Commission to better shield consumers from food fraud have changed nothing on the ground. One year on, another 'horsegate' could easily make the headlines tomorrow.

"Consumer confidence in the food sector continues to reel, but greater transparency of our food chain is the remedy. Clearer labels and tougher controls need to be enacted to make manufacturers more liable for what they put in our food.

"We need higher financial penalties for those businesses who take risks, while independent inspections should remain the norm.

"Last month, meat from [lab horses](#) used to produce vaccines entered the food chain in France. Events like this prove fraud remains prevalent, yet many Member States continue to slash food control budgets. Food label checks in the UK dropped by [16.2%](#) as a result of such cutbacks.

"By piling up arguments against origin labelling for processed meals, the Commission has ignored the [90%](#) of consumers who want to know where their meat comes from.

"Everyone, from industry to consumers, can gain from a stricter, clearer and more trustworthy food supply chain. It is the right time to act, so what is the EU waiting for?"

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