There to protect you

The European Union makes sure that your food is safe from farm to fork.

The EU strategy deals not just with food at all stages of production, processing and distribution, but also with animal health and welfare, and with plant health as well. The EU sets a global benchmark for food safety, plant health and animal health.

The EU’s common agricultural policy (CAP) requires farmers to apply high production standards and sustainable farming methods. Thanks to the rules and standards developed under the European food safety policy, our food can be traced back to the food manufacturer or the farm of origin. In order to be more coherent with society expectations, the CAP reform introduced the cross-compliance scheme. This means that, if farmers are not respecting certain rules on animal welfare, plant health or environmental protection, their CAP payments will be reduced.

Should problems arise, the EU is ready to act.

To find out more:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/sfp/index_en.htm
Binding legislation to ensure that food and feed, including imports, are safe. These laws also cover animal and plant health, the use of antibiotics, the hormones’ ban, traceability, labelling and the risk of contamination from external substances or from the environment.

Reliance on sound independent scientific advice when handling crises or drafting new legislative proposals.

Enforcement and control of EU rules, including on-the-spot inspections of national competent authorities dealing with production and processing facilities, make the EU and its third countries that supply the European market.

Checking that the actual food on our tables is safe is one thing. EU consumer protection goes much further. It extends to animal feed as well as food, and covers food hygiene too. It has three core elements:

1. An all-in approach
2. Extra care
3. CAP support requires cross compliance

Know what you eat

Common EU standards for labelling require key ingredients to be listed on labels. We can therefore avoid ingredients to which we may be allergic or intolerant. The harmonisation of nutrition and health claims means that you can be sure what terms like ‘low fat’ or ‘high fibre’ really mean. Any genetically modified ingredients must be identified.

Organic farming

The CAP encourages organic farming, which uses only natural inputs to produce wholesome food, and gives financial support to farmers who switch from intensive to eco-friendly production methods.

Keeping animals safe

Because Community legislation imposes high standards across the EU for animal health and welfare, live animals and animal products can be traded freely. Welfare standards apply not only on the farm, but also to animals on the move. Transport conditions must be adapted to animals, journey times limited, and regular feeding and watering provided.

Quick response time

The European Commission can act quickly in the event of a food crisis, stopping the movement of animals or the transport and distribution of the food concerned. It also has a rapid alert system in cases involving unsafe food products. This covers foods, ingredients, banned substances or excessive amounts of residues of pesticides, veterinary products or other contaminants.

Prudence prevails

When there is an outbreak of animal disease or a case of contaminated food, the Commission decides how to respond and whether it is wise to seek scientific advice from the European Food Safety Authority. When assessing potential risks it takes account of the precautionary principle: it does not wait for scientific certainty if the experts say there is a serious even of a potential danger.