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A Retrospective Analysis of Compliance by Livestock Operators with Breeding and Reproduction Legislation

Carmen-Daniela Uşurelu[1],[2], Cătălin Bogdan Sîrbu[1], Beatrice Ana-Maria Sîrbu[1], Paul Florin Paven[1], Ion Valeriu Carabă[1]

[1] University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timișoara, Faculty of Bioengineering of Animal Resources, 300645, Calea Aradului, no. 119, Timișoara, Romania

[2] “Prof. Dr. G. K. Constantinescu” National Agency for Animal Husbandry, Balotești, 077015, Bucharest-Ploiești Highway, Km 18.2, Romania

Abstract

The paper presents a retrospective analysis of the official controls carried out in the livestock sector during the years 2024 and 2025, based on Regulation (EU) 2016/1012 and Law No. 32/2019. It monitors operators compliance with zootechnical standards and financial incentive levers (OM No. 61/2023, MO No.1571/2022). It analyzes the impact of ‘’administrative pressure’’ and the mandatory breeding certificate on farmers decisions to remain in the Official Performance Control (C.O.P.). The results indicate an increase in the compliance rate of operators and a stabilization of standards among the controlled holdings.

Introduction

Pillar legislative framework: Regulation (EU) 2016/1012 harmonized nationally throught the Law Of Zootechnics No. 32/2019.

Responsible authority: National Agency for Animal Husbandry (A.N.Z.) through the Directorate of State Inspection in Animal Husbandry.

Working protocol: Operational Procedure-72 guides differentiated control actions (breeding societies vs breeders directly in the holding).

Economic levers: OM No. 61/2023 subsidizes up to 70% of C.O.P. costs and 100% of genealogical registries.

Sectoral divergence: Order No.106/2024 maintained the mandatory certificate as an eligibility criterion only for the bovine sector, eliminating it for sheep and goats.

Research hypothesis: To what extent does the “administrative pressure” correlated with the financial stake determine the compliance or withdrawal behavior of farmers?

Material and method

The data source is represented by the official activity reports of the A.N.Z. for the years 2024-2025.

The database sampling consists of a total of 3,713 holdings registered in the Official Performance Control (C.O.P.).

The selection was based on a mixed algorithm: 25% randomized selection and 75% risk-factor-based analysis.

Inspection volume remained constant with, 2,333 official inspections conducted each year.

Statistical analysis: descriptive, centralization of absolute frequencies and calculation of percentage shares (%).

Table I. Number of accredited breeding companies and associations inspected during 2024–2025

Year	Breeding associations inspected	Accredited associations inspected	Target animal species
2024	12	59	Cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats
2025	16	67	Cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats

Results and discussion

Specification/Type of inspection report	Year 2024 (Cumulative)*	Percentage in 2024 (%)	Year 2025 (Total)	2025 Share (**)
Audit reports with no deficiencies	1,749	74.96%	1,453	78.03%
Audit reports with deficiencies	510	21.86%	350	18.79%
Proposals for exclusion from the C.O.P.	48	2.06%	32	1.72%
Proposals to Reject Technical Documentation	26	1.12%	27	1.45%

Evolutionary conclusion: the data show a clear improvement in the compliance rate among operators in 2025, with the share of non-deficient control reports increasing to 78.03%, driven by strict on-site monitoring.

Impact of Order no. 106/2024: By removing the pedigree certificate from the list of mandatory eligibility criteria for obtaining coupled income support for small ruminants, a marked downward trend was observed in both livestock numbers and the number of farms included in the C.O.P. during the period analyzed.

Indicator	Year 2024	Year 2025	Absolute Decrease	Percentage Decrease
Sheep population (head)	2,840,977	2,641,969	199,008	7.01%
Sheep farms	9,524	8,565	868	9.11
Goat herds (head)	169,845	143,506	26,339	15.51
Goat farms	1,263	1,103	160	12.67

A. Non-compliance at the level of breeding associations and accredited members:

shortcomings in the management of documents and computerized records: the existence of incomplete breeder files that are improperly archived at the associations’ headquarters, and failure to update the database with production and breeding data;

control and monitoring deficiencies: failure by breeding associations to conduct supervisory checks;

deviations from the scope of activity: identification of serious cases in which the accredited association was not actually carrying out the activity for which it received accreditation.

B. Non-compliance at the level of inspected farms:

lack of breeding records: absence of AI records;

breeding irregularities: identification of breeding animals not authorized for natural mating found among the cattle herds registered for inspection;

deficiencies in identification and traceability: the presence of animals registered in the C.O.P. that had not been slaughtered, along with the failure to maintain documents regarding the activities carried out at the registered farm’s premises and the maintenance of outdated farm records;

deviations from mandatory schedules: the absence of inspectors at the scheduled date and time of the inspection, contrary to the agreed-upon official inspection schedule.

Conclusions

Hypothesis validation: the “administrative pressure” exerted though controls, combined with the financial stake of the certificate, represents the determining factor for retaining breeders in the C.O.P. .

Sector disciplining: maintaining constant rigor in the field (2,333 controls/year) considerably increased the rate of holdings without deficiencies (from 74.96% to 78.03%).

Warning sign: economic behavior shows the performance orientation through breeding heavily depends on subsidy conditioning. When the mandatory certificate disappears (as in the sheep/goat population), breeders renounce official monitoring.

Strategic role: the breeding certificate is not a simple formality, but the essential pillar of cohesion for national selection programs. Without financial conditioning, there is a major risk of losing the accumulated genetic progress.

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