



The "Canasson 34" case  
An example of upstream and downstream fraud in the horse sector

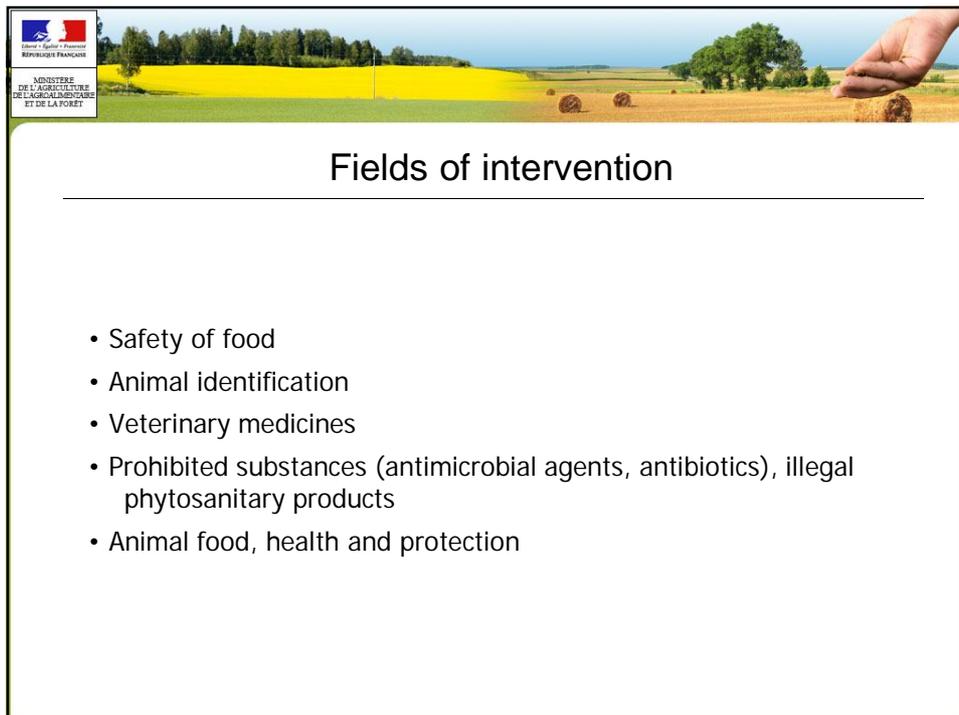
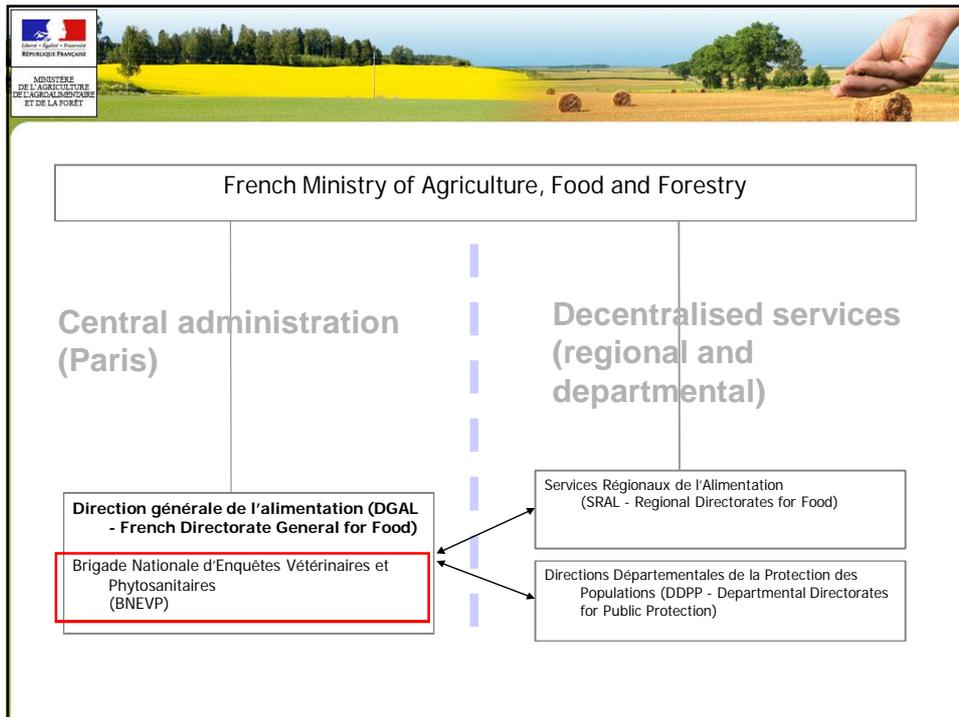
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Brigade Nationale d'Enquêtes Vétérinaires et Phytosanitaires (BNEVP  
- national unit for veterinary and phytosanitary investigations)

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A national investigation service reporting to the French Directorate General for food ( DGAL) which is tasked with *"conducting investigations as part of combating **organised crime** in the health and phytosanitary sector and provide technical support to health control services, especially in times of **crisis**."*

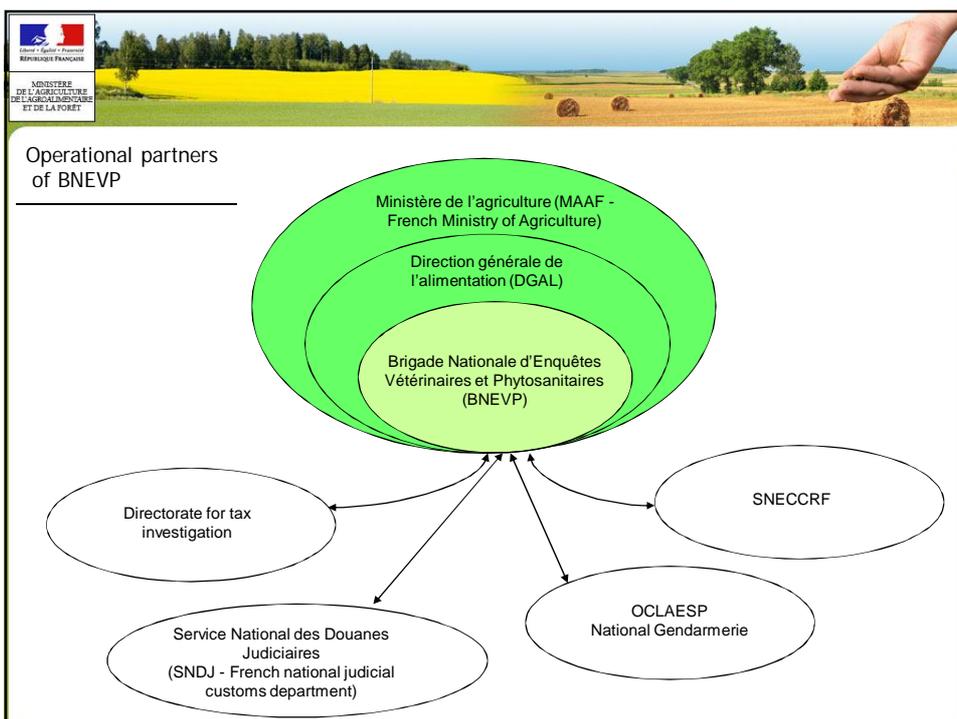





## Organisation

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- 17 agents
- 12 investigators
  - Phytosanitary sector: 4
  - Veterinary sector: 8
  
- Engineers, Vets and Technicians with specific skills and areas of expertise
- National competence/all entities





## Horse sector investigation

- \* Information from inspectors in abattoirs:  
Problems/managing the traceability of horses and medication documentation
- \* Information from territorial inspectors on fairs and markets:  
Absence of intra-EEC certificates, transponders and passports  
⇒ Horse sector investigation initiated

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*BNEVP is becoming a known representative*

- ⇒ Increase in the flow of information from territorial services, judiciary services and criminal investigation officers
- ⇒ Knowledge of honest and dishonest French and European stakeholders in the horse sector in France



## The Canasson 34 case (1/2)

- Beginning of the case: Anonymous tip-off made to the DDPP in the Aude *département* and the French tax office  
Tax evasion as well health-related fraud in relation to horses reported
- Reporting transmitted to BNEVP.
- Facts checked
- Crimes brought to light
- Article 40 of the French Code of Criminal Procedure to the prosecutor



## The Canasson 34 case (2/2)

- Investigating judge and investigation service (Gendarmerie) appointed by the prosecutor
- Investigation by the Gendarmerie carried out using phone tapping
  - ⇒ System for falsifying identification passports and medication documentation
  - Horse meat excluded from human consumption released for consumption
- December 2013: Huge Gendarmerie operation led in 11 *départements*. Searches and hearings took place. 21 people taken in for questioning.



## Lessons learned from the case




## Administration and criminal investigation: a complex cohabitation

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- Canasson 34: Finally, simple administrative management
  - \* Anticipation is possible: fraud training for inspectors in abattoirs by BNEVP
  - \* 95% of meat sold fresh in France
  - Only 10 tonnes of recall/production using frozen meat
- But often:
  - Conflicting objectives:
    - Transparency/secretcy
    - Consumer protection/disappearance of criminal networks
  - Completely different time periods: days/months and even years
- Walking the thin line between two worlds (administrative and criminal investigation) = the daily task of BNEVP  
A positioning that is sometimes quite delicate




## Food fraud and health risks are often intrinsically linked

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- The Canasson case: In the beginning, a purely economic issue (fraud)
- The investigation led by BNEVP made it possible to identify health risks:
  - Past medication of horses unknown
  - No traceability

⇒ Upset the system for ensuring security in the food chain: **identification of animals ↔ traceability ↔ knowledge of inputs**




### A European case Requiring administrative and criminal investigation cooperation (1/3)

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- Significant involvement by a Spanish national (false passports and false health certificates)
- An International Rogatory Commission in Spain in May 2014 - Wide-scale operation
- Judicial cooperation under the aegis and authority of EUROJUST
  - Role of liaison, negotiation and regulation
  - Possible implementation of an investigation unit with investigators from several countries




### A European case Requiring administrative and criminal investigation cooperation (2/3)

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Crucial upstream and downstream administrative cooperation, insofar as:

- \* Consumer countries = Italy, France, Belgium
- \* Supplier countries but not big consumers  
E.g. Spain, Germany, Netherlands
- \* Selling price related to meat origin = Meat origin fraud
- \* Certification refused for slaughtering excluded horses in France but horses slaughtered nonetheless in some Member States
- \* Passports and passport management varied between countries

**TOO COMPLEX for isolated management**



## A European case Requiring administrative and criminal investigation cooperation (3/3)

### Sharing experiences

- \* Belgium January 2013
- \* Netherlands October 2014

To find out more about and gain a better understanding of fraud schemes  
To have competent, on-hand and nimble on-site contacts



Thank you for your time