Spain: AICA, a stronghold of the food chain

Information Agency and Food Control (AICA) works to serve the whole sector to ensure compliance with the law of the food chain, a pioneer in the European Union standard and an example to follow by other Member States. Spain is a leader in Europe in regulation and monitoring of the food chain.

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Isabel García Tejerina, stressed that farmers, ranchers and professional organizations have their firmest ally in AICA to ensure compliance with the law of the food chain. "AICA works to serve the whole industry," he stressed.
Isabel García Tejerina today presented the latest data from the inspection activity of the Information Agency and Food Control (AICA), and took stock of the first years of implementation of the Law on measures to improve the functioning of the food chain. During the ceremony, which was held at the headquarters of AICA, the minister has been accompanied by the Secretary General of Agriculture and Food, Carlos Cabanas, and the director of AICA, José Miguel Herrero.
Improvement Act of the food chain

In his speech, Garcia Tejerina recalled how the food chain was in 2012, when traditional business practices hindered the proper functioning of the market. Practices that harmed mainly agricultural producers, the link with less bargaining power between operators.

In this situation, the European Union urged Member States to seek solutions that would balance the chain. Thus, the minister indicated that the Government of Spain promoted the Law of measures to improve the functioning of the food chain, which has established a system of self-responsibility of operators and a public control system simultaneously. This system is

complemented by the creation of the Observatory on the Food Chain, which analyzes and proposes measures for a more balanced development of the sector.

To the minister, this law is a reform "of enormous depth, a milestone for the Spanish food industry and the national economy." It is, he added, a pioneer in the European Union standard and an example to follow by other Member States.

Specifically, García Tejerina has stated that the law requires the chain to sign written contracts to include in them a price that must be respected, and meet payment deadlines. Therefore, "written commitment, price and payment term are the elements that guarantee the legality of the commercial relationship," he underlined. In short, some new rules and a system of penalties for those who do not comply with what the warranty and legal security of all operators of the food chain is strengthened.
Inspection activity

In this context, the Agency of Information and Food Control is attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment responsible for ensuring compliance with the law and to propose sanctions if it detects infringements body. It is an accessible body, open to participation, willing to listen and to offer solutions, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the information.

García Tejerina, who has shelled the main data of inspection activity AICA, said that these results "encourage us to continue in this line to continue to strengthen the balance of trade relations, preventing abusive practices, improving bargaining power producers and streamlining the functioning of the market."

At European level, García Tejerina has made mention of a recent comparative study of the laws of the Member States of the Union, which concludes that Spain is a leader in Europe in regulation and monitoring of the food chain. "We were the first country to regulate the chain as a whole and are the most active country, which is more punishing and may impose higher fines for breaches EU law," said the minister.
Also, García Tejerina has value to the work of AICA divulgadora to publicize all their rights and obligations operators, with more than a hundred information days. In this area, AICA has recently updated its Web page (www.aica.gob.es) with all information necessary to denounce or raise indications for breaches of the law.

Moreover, García Tejerina has indicated that the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (TTIP) is an agreement of great economic importance for the food industry and for the whole of the Spanish economy.

In this context, the minister stressed that Member States have given a mandate to the European Commission for negotiating the European production model, which reflects the highest standards of quality for all consumers in the world is maintained, taking note that the European Union is the

largest exporter of food worldwide.

On the other hand, García Tejerina has indicated that the control of the Ministry plans with the Autonomous Communities to detect commercial fraud, as happened with virgin olive oil labeled as extra virgin, and to act.

In this regard, García Tejerina has said that, for this government, quality is a key factor of competitiveness. For that, the law of improving food quality was enacted, the rules have been revised production of more than 500 products, and work with the Autonomous Communities with significant control plans.

Source: MAGRAMA