



Hepatitis E issue is under control

There are reports coming from the United Kingdom about the Hepatitis E virus, where there is conjecture that the virus originated in, among other things, Dutch meat and meat products.

The Hepatitis E issue is well-known in the Netherlands in the entire production chain: at the pig farmers, at the pig slaughterhouses and at the manufacturers of meat and meat products. Based on focused and effective management measures and on previous reports (NVWA [Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority], the trade associations for the meat and meat product industry (COV [Dutch Meat Association] & VNV [The Dutch Meat Products Association]) maintain that the issue is properly highlighted, managed effectively and that Dutch suppliers provide safe raw materials and products.

Nominal health risk

The health risk of Hepatitis E is relatively limited. In people with a (significantly) reduced immune system, it can lead to jaundice (flu symptoms), to liver failure and is further only a health risk in people who have had an organ transplant.

Transmission in the consumer can occur via pig livers that have not been heated sufficiently. Pork, blood and natural casings have been studied, but they do not transmit the virus to any significant degree.

Contamination can also occur from the environment (surface water), other foodstuffs (raw milk, shellfish) and via humans, particularly from donated blood, organ transplants or bone marrow transplants.

Management measures

Previous research (NVWA, Sanquin blood bank) has confirmed that proper heating of the liver, in particular, as raw material, leads to products that are just as safe as other pork products.

New developments are closely monitored and translated into tightened measures in order to continue to guarantee safe raw materials and products.

The trade associations recommend the nutritional advice for people with an increased risk to avoid pork liver products and composite non-heated pork products, since the product information provides insufficient insight regarding the manufacturing method.