



19 OCTOBER 2023

FISHERIES GENERAL MEMORANDUM

ORDER NO. 002

Series of 2023

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF VERIFICATION PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT FISH AND FISHERY/AQUATIC PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR THE EU MARKET ARE FREE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE

Whereas, the European Union is a major importer of fish and fishery/aquatic products having imported an estimated volume of 50,610 MT valued approximately at 222.6 million USD in 2021 (Philippine Fisheries Profile 2021);

Whereas, Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No. 1333/2008 of the European Parliament on food additives provides: "Prohibition of non-compliant food additives and/or non-compliant food: No person shall place on the market a food additive or any food in which such a food additive is present if the use of the food additive does not comply with this Regulation";

Whereas, during the 2022 Virtual Audit Mission to the Philippines conducted by the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety DG (SANTE) in June 13 to 28 2022, the DG (SANTE) recommended that the Philippines establish official control measures to ensure that carbon monoxide-treated tuna fishery products are not exported to the European Union;

Wherefore, in response to the recommendation of DG (SANTE), the following guidelines are hereby enacted by the Bureau to be followed by the Fish Inspectors in the conduct of fish inspection.

The Fish Inspectors are directed to:

- Identify and distinguish CO-treated from non-CO treated fish and fishery/aquatic products through the conduct of sensory evaluation (i.e visual examination).
- Review and verify records, such as but not limited to, production records, packaging materials, product labels, and production code to distinguish between CO-treated from non-CO treated fish and fishery/ aquatic products.
- Check and verify the implementation of structural and operating requirements to ensure that there is no cross-contamination that occurs between CO-treated and non-CO-treated fish and fishery/aquatic products during production, and that there is no co-mingling during storage, packing, and shipment;

- Collect samples for Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Total Volatile Basic Nitrogen (TVBN) analysis to be performed in BFAR-recognized and/or PAB-accredited laboratories at least once a year;
- Conduct visual examination on fish and fishery/aquatic products during pre-shipment and on-site inspection; and
- Undergo periodic training to improve and update the said verification procedures.

This order shall take effect immediately.

All orders and/or memoranda inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked.

Issued this 19th day of October, 2023 at BFAR Central Office, Quezon City.


ATTY. DEMOSTHENES R. ESCOTO
Director

