



**Ministry of Environment
and Food of Denmark**
Danish Veterinary and
Food Administration

Danish e-commerce control system for food

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The Food Supplement Group

Special unit created in 2004

Part of The Flying Squad

Control of the safety of notified food supplements in Denmark

Internet control on food supplements

Control of nutrition and health claims

Carries out inspections and projects in collaboration with other authorities



Qualifications and skills in The flying squad

28 employees in 2016 in the Flying Squad including the Food Supplement Group (5 employees).

Assists the Food supplement group in inspections if needed.

Qualifications in investigations, IT, accounting, food inspections and food science.



E-commerce control - Danish and foreign websites

Actions and measures of The Food Supplement Group in internet controls :

- Identification of hazardous products (food supplements)
- Identification of online traders (not registered at DVFA)

Information on products and websites obtained from:

- Adverse effect notifications
- Consumer complaints
- RAFFS
- Tips from the food control offices
- Media
- Other authorities, Danish Health and Medicines Authority, Tax authorities etc.



Identifying the food business operator

Identification of the food business operator (FBO):

All FBOs are obliged to be registered at the competent authority

1. FBO is not registered but is identified on the website
2. FBO which is neither registered nor identified

Option 1 – FBO is identified and operating in Denmark:

Internet sale with a „normal“ store: raises no major problem (a physical control can be carried out).

Option 2 - FBO neither registered nor identified :

An investigation is carried out.

What if the FBO is abroad?

Other EU member states 3rd country - in case of noncompliance competent authority in another MS should be contacted. Information to public.



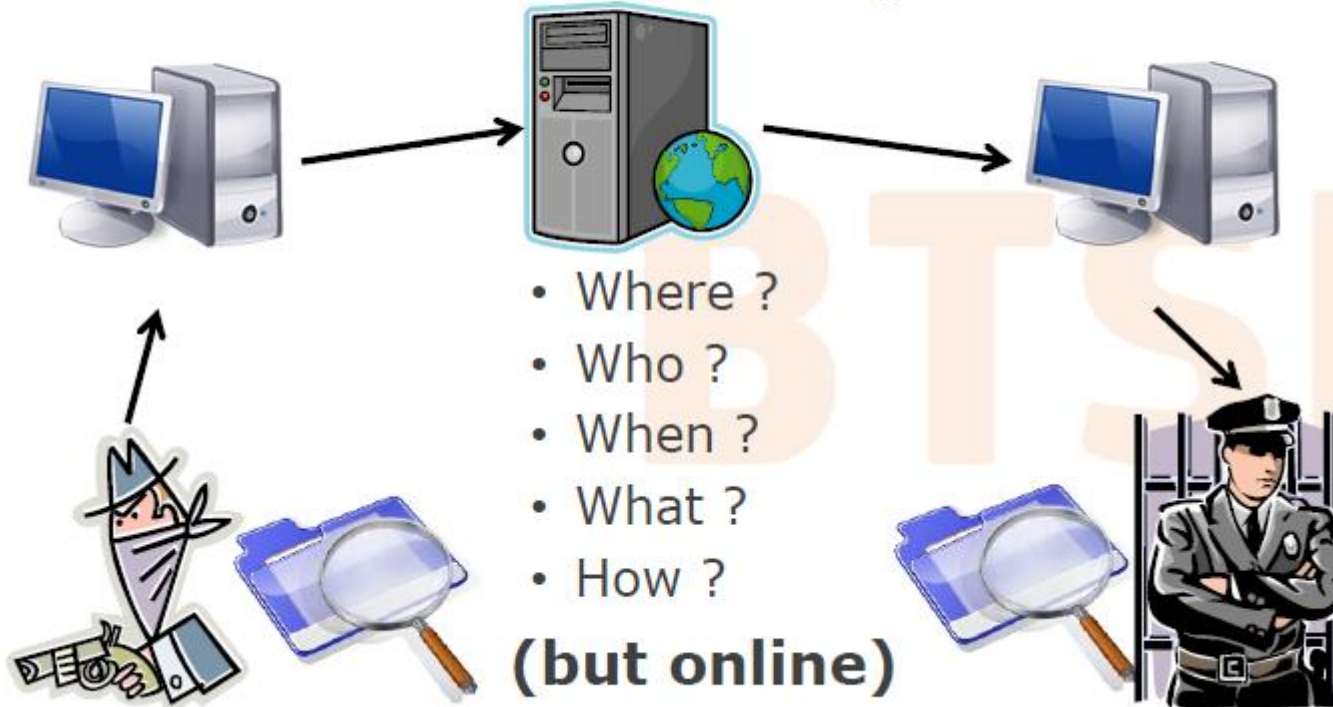
Challenges with online investigations

- **Determining whether its a Danish or foreign website can be extensive work as several unregistered websites do not want to give the correct current information about their affiliation. This requires an in-depth and sometimes more prolonged investigation.**
- **Marketing on facebook and elektronik marketplaces.**



On line investigations

Just like any other investigation:



Cooperation with other authorities

Tax authorities

Veterinary border inspection (exchange of information in connection with inspections at airport control points)

Danish medicines agency

Danish national police

Danish Environmental Protection Agency

Anti Doping Danmark (ADD) (independent institution under the Ministry of Culture)

Team Danmark (organisation who's primary mission is to support the Danish elite sport)



E-commerce control - Danish and foreign websites

Actions and measures of The food supplement Group in internet controls (continued):

- **Online traders located in Denmark, which is not registered at the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, will be subject to an inspection at the address**
- **If we find foreign websites marketing unsafe food supplements toward Danish consumers, a press release/warning will be send out to the Danish public. Authorities in the country where the company behind the website is located in will be notified.**



Search methods

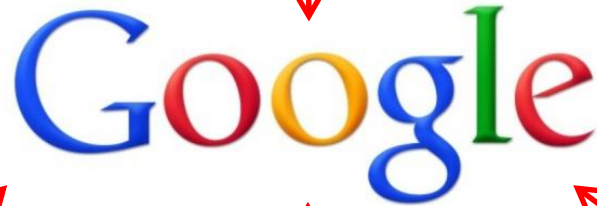
Manual internet search (stand alone computer)

Screenshots of offers, whois information etc.

HT Track



Methods



Every website has an IP-address (www.ip-address.com/[/www.dom.ter.dk](http://www.dom.ter.dk)). The IP addresses points to a webserver.

Sometimes necessary to contact the webhosting company for information on the website owner.



Approach

Information from website?

Historic information (internet Archive)?

Domain Tools/ Whois databases?

Image search?

Results from google?

Findings on blogs and social media?

LinkedIn results?

Facebook profile?

E-mailaddresses/phonenumbers?

Documentation!



Results on E-commerce control 2014 - 2016

Danish websites

- **Inspection of 105 FBO´s in total**
- **Non compliance with legislation were found at 61 FBO´s**
- **93 food supplements were found to pose a possible healthrisk**



Case 1: Colloidal silver

- First found as a food supplement under inspection in cooperation with the Danish Tax authorities.
- Imported by online trader which were not registered by DVFA.
- Not in compliance with Directive 2002/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 June 2002 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to food supplements. Only vitamins and minerals listed in Annex I, may be used for the manufacture of food supplements
- Possible healthrisk
- Manual internet search resulted in seven unregistered online traders of colloidal silver.
- Problem: All trying to circumvent the law.



Case 2 – Internet Control

- The biggest case so far. Regarding a food supplement containing the plant *Polygonum Multiflorum* Thunb.
 - Classified as unsafe do to the risk of hepatitis
- The Food Supplement, Ginseng Kianpi Pil, was marketed by on a website registered in Denmark. The site was in Danish.
- An inspection was conducted in their private home. A fine was given for marketing unsafe food, cf. art. 14 in regulation 178/2002.
- The case didn't stop there....later, we found that the website was still active but now it was registered in New Delhi, India...
- A year later, the Danish Customs stopped several packages with this food supplement addressed to the same family.



Case 2 – Continued

- **The Flying Squad conducted an inspection (again) but like the last time we were unable to find solid evidence of their activity**
- **Further we found ads for the food supplement on a Danish electronic marketplace – no identification.**
- **Due to the IP-address that was used to set up these ads, we found that the ads were set up by one of the family members**
- **Now we had evidence (activity in DK). Thus we handed the case to the police for help in conducting an inspection/search at the address.**



Case 2 – Continued

- In August 2012 we assisted the police in an inspection/search at the home address.
- We found about 50 packages of the food supplement, anabolic steroids. We also found a computer that was logged in as an administrator for the website that is registered in New Delhi, India...
- The case has been to court in September 2014 and November 2014
- The final verdict.....
- Two public warnings regarding Ginseng Kianpi Pil has been issued.



Inspection on facebook



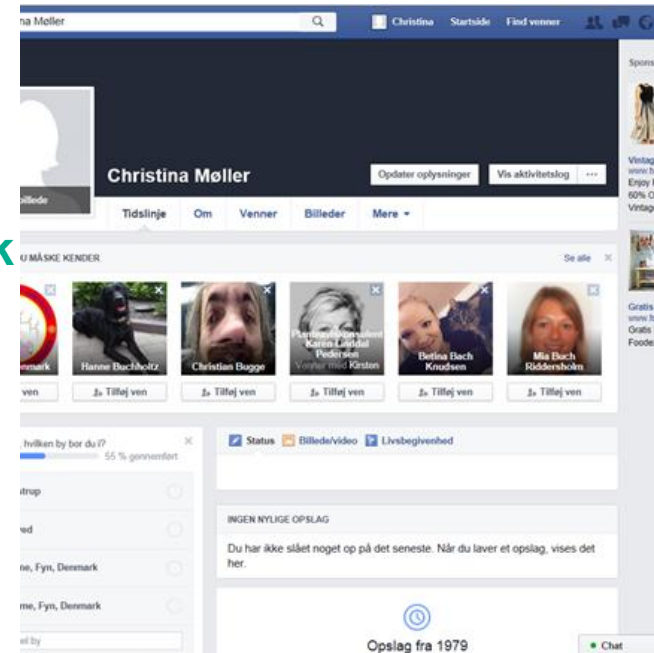
Different types of Facebook profiles

- **Important to distinguish between private and public information**
- **An open profile can be included automatically in the inspection, because the information on the profile is accessible for all users on Facebook - everyone can access the information for the person / company**
- **The same can be the case if a person who otherwise has limited accessibility to its profile, has a very large number of 'friends' on Facebook. Always a concrete assessment, but generally the more 'friends' the more public the profile can be considered to be (closed groups)**



Facebook profil

- The Flying squad has created it's own Facebook profil – real information has been used
- No pictures and no friends – a neutral open profile (everybody can access the information)
- Access to the profile should not require an active 'Facebook friendship'
- The profile can be used by all the staff in the Flying Squad



Kosttilskudsgruppen har oprettet egen Facebook profil

Find us on

- **A Facebook profile should be included in the control in the same way as the FBOs own website, since the marketing of food to Facebook should be considered as part of the company's overall marketing**
- **Remember to document what you find!**



Marketing on facebook

- We have had several cases where unsafe food supplements and sports products are marketed on Facebook and where no information is available on the facebook profile on the business operator except an unlisted phonenumber where costumers can place orders.
- The Danish police has been assisting the Food Supplement Group in an ongoing case (regarding marketing of Jac3D on facebook). The police have provided most information describing the mobile phone that has been associated with a particular transmission tower.
- A particularly challenging case because the FBO continues to use different profiles on facebook. Strong suspicion but no direct information on who is behind the activities.



Future goals

- **Possibility of online sampling/test purchase**
- **Transmission of product search results via AAC**
- **Communication with third countries**



Any questions?

