



BELGIUM (BEL)

PROVISIONAL DATA

Population: 10.1 million (1994)

Area: 305 123 km²



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1. General Information

Belgium is a federal state which consists of 3 communities and 3 regions. Based on language and culture, Belgium can be divided into 3 communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German Community. The Communities have the responsibility towards control of infectious diseases. Each has its own Ministry (Ministry of *respective* Community, Administration of Public Health). In Brussels, where the Flemish Community and the French Community both share the responsibility, a Community Commission manages the control of infectious diseases.

The country is also divided into 3 regions which have also responsibility towards Public Health in their tasks of environmental and zoonotic disease control. Again, each has its own Ministry. The Flemish Community and the Flemish Region then integrated their administrations into one.

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1.1 Statutory Notification Systems

Table BE 1

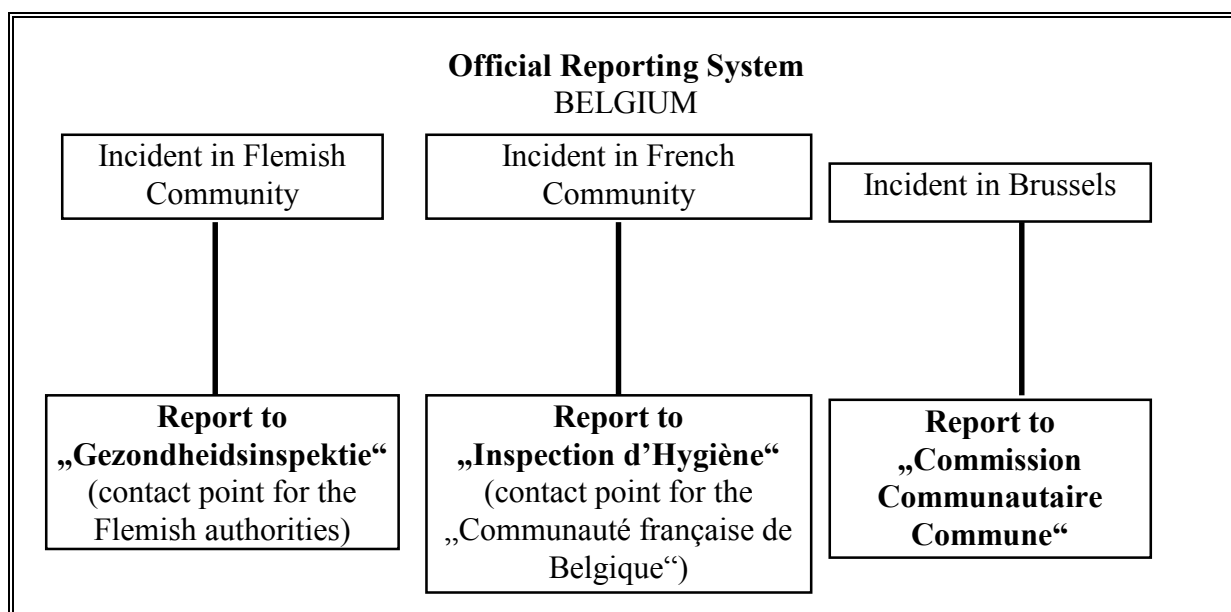
Legal Framework	Ministries of Health for each community are responsible for introducing changes in the statutory notification system.
Levels of responsibility	<p>At Federal level the Ministry for Public Health is responsible for: Inspection of drugs and food products Control of imported diseases Etc.</p> <p>Governments at Community level are responsible for: Prevention Social and environmental-hygienic aspects of health Etc.</p> <p>The administration of these Community governments has per province a “health inspector” in charge of surveillance and control of infectious diseases. The tasks are: Registration of notified cases of infectious diseases Co-ordination and follow-up of control measures Investigation and follow-up of outbreaks Vaccination policy and its implementation</p> <p>Governments at Regional level are responsible for: Environmental and zoonotic disease control Water quality and control of waterborne diseases</p> <p>In Flanders, the Community and Regional authority are “merged”, the health inspector is the authority responsible for the common tasks. In Brussels, a separate authority (the Community Commission) carries the responsibility. Since the German Community is quite small, the tasks prevention and control of</p>

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	notifiable diseases are executed by the French Community.
Notifiable Diseases	In the Flemish Community 37 diseases are notifiable and case definitions are in use for most of them. In Brussels and the French Community 42 diseases are notifiable. All of them have case definitions. No financial incentives are given for notifying physicians.
Levels of reporting	Local level for reporting –Local Health Department, at the level of the province, under the supervision of the health inspector. Usually at the level of the province with an average population size of 900,000 (250,000 – 1,600,000)
Public Health Action	The responsibility for case management is held by the notifier. Control measures including contact tracing and outbreak investigation is generally the responsibility of the Public Health Service, primarily on local level, with support from the administration at the central (community) level. If requested, support can also be provided by the IPH.
Data dissemination	In Flanders an epidemiological bulletin, the <i>Epidemiologisch Bulletin van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap</i> is published (http://www.wvc.vlaanderen.be). It contains tables with notification data. In addition an annual report is disseminated. In the French Community, the Direction Général de la Santé publishes data on a monthly basis in the <i>Revelé mensuel de maladies transmissibles</i> .. At the IPH, the monthly data from sentinel laboratories are accessible via internet (http://www.iph.fgov.be/epidemio/epinl/plabnl/index.htm).

Figure BE 1



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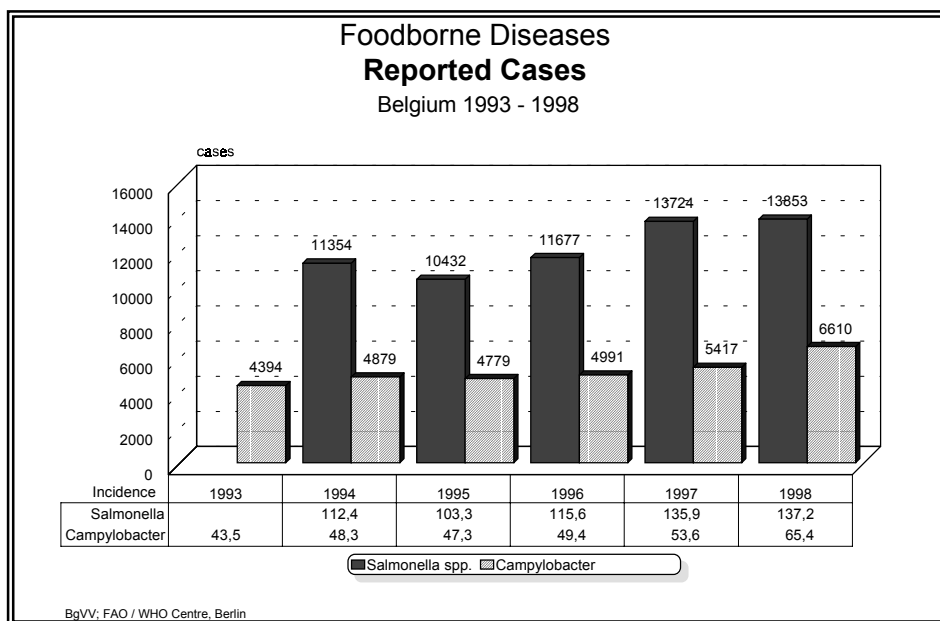
2. Statutory notification

Table BE 2

Statutory notification of communicable diseases
BELGIUM/Brussels, Flemish Community, French Community 1993 - 1998

Agent	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<i>Salmonella</i>						
<i>S. Enteritidis</i>		5721	5028	5998	8036	8599
Incidence rate		56.6	49.8	59.4	79.6	85.1
<i>S. Hadar</i>		406	408	580	643	435
Incidence rate		4.0	4.0	5.7	6.4	4.3
<i>S. Typhimurium</i>		3433	3451	3395	3184	3069
Incidence rate		34.0	34.2	33.6	31.5	30.4
<i>Other Salm spp.</i>		1794	1545	1704	1861	1750
Incidence rate		17.8	15.3	16.9	18.4	17.3
<i>Shigella</i>						
Incidence rate		-	-	-	2.0	2.8
<i>Campylobacter</i>	4394	4879	4779	4991	5417	6610
Incidence rate	43.5	48.3	47.3	49.4	53.6	65.4
<i>E. coli (VTEC+ETEC)</i>	-	-	-	53	32	37
Incidence rate	-	-	-	0.5	0.3	0.4
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	202	355	737	413	603	833
Incidence rate	2.0	3.5	7.3	4.1	6.0	8.2
<i>E. histolytica</i>	207	-	260	256	289	294
Incidence rate	2.0	-	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.9
<i>Hepatitis A</i>	-	707	555	565	465	517
Incidence rate	-	7.0	5.5	5.6	4.6	5.1
<i>Listeria</i>	36	32	38	50	45	42
Incidence rate	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
<i>Giardia</i>	1379	1588	1784	1663	1557	1899
Incidence rate	13.7	15.7	17.7	16.5	15.4	18.8
<i>Y. enterocolitica</i>	803	751	634	589	492	440
Incidence rate	8.0	7.4	6.3	5.8	4.9	4.4

Figure BE 2



3. Epidemiologically investigated incidents

3.1 Salmonellosis

Table BE 3

Salmonella cases by serotypes
BELGIUM 1993 - 1998

Serotypes	1993 (n=10.840)	1994 (n=11.354)	1995 (n=10.430)	1996* (n=11.677)	1997 (n=13.724)	1998 (n=13.853)
<i>S. Enteritidis</i>	48.5%	50.5%	47.8%	51.2%	58.2%	62.1%
<i>S. Typhimurium</i>	32.6%	30.3%	33.7%	29.3%	23.5%	22.2%
<i>S. Virchow</i>	2.5%	2.7%	2.3%	1.5%	0.8%	0.8%
<i>S. agona</i>		0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
<i>S. infantis</i>	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	2.2%	1.9%	1.2%
<i>S. Hadar</i>	1.4%	3.6%	3.9%	5.0%	4.7%	3.2%
<i>S. Bovismorbificans</i>				1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
<i>S. Derby</i>		1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
<i>S. Brandenburg</i>	1.4%	1.8%	2.2%	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%
Others	12.1%	8.4%	7.2%	6.7%	6.3%	6.2%

* Isolates received from all medical laboratories

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4.2 Incriminated foods

Table BE 5

Foodborne disease outbreaks by incriminated foods and causative agents
BELGIUM/Flemish Community 1995-1998

Food	Agent				Total	
	<i>Campylobact.</i>	<i>Salmonella</i>	<i>Staph. aureus+</i> <i>Bac. cereus</i>	Agent unknown	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Cheese	-	2	-	7	9	2.5
Milk	-	-	-	19	19	5.4
Meat, meat products	1	9	1	20	31	8.8
Poultry	2	4	2	11	19	5.4
Egg, egg products	-	45	-	49	94	26.6
Salads, dressings, mayonnaise	-	7	-	-	7	2.0
Fish, shellfish/ shellfish products	2	-	-	4	6	1.7
Soup, sauce	-	1	-	-	1	0.3
Pudding, mousse	-	2	-	-	2	0.6
Ice-cream	-	7	-	-	7	2.0
Various foods	-	31	1	-	32	9.0
Unknown	2	95	3	27	127	35.9
TOTAL	7	203	7	137	354	100.0

Figure BE 4

