

RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED

The legal basis of the system is Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (O.J. No L 31 of 1 February 2002).

The purpose of the rapid alert system for food and feed (RASFF) is to provide the control authorities with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety.

To assist the members of the network, notifications are classified under three different headings¹:

- **ALERT NOTIFICATIONS**

Alert notifications are sent when a food or feed presenting a serious risk is on the market and when immediate action is required. Alerts are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal/recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they also can take the necessary measures.

Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market. The Member States have their own mechanisms to carry out such actions, including the provision of detailed information through the media if necessary.

- **INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS**

Information notifications concern a food or feed that was placed on the market for which a risk has been identified, but for which the other members of the network do not have to take immediate action, because the product has not reached their market or is no longer present on their market or because the nature of the risk does not require any immediate action.

- **BORDER REJECTIONS**

These notifications concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU (and the EEA²) when a health risk was found. The notifications are transmitted to all EEA border posts in order to reinforce controls and to ensure that the rejected product does not re-enter the Community through another border post.

The Commission publishes a weekly overview of RASFF notifications belonging to the above three categories. As it is necessary to strike the balance between openness and the protection of commercial information, the trade names and the identity of individual companies are not published. This is not detrimental to consumer protection, as a RASFF notification implies that all required measures have been or are in the process of being taken.

The public must be aware that the Commission is not in a position to release more information other than that published here. However, in exceptional circumstances where the protection of human health

¹ This classification was put in place on 1 January 2008 and differs from the classification used until then.

² European Economic Area

requires greater transparency, the Commission takes the appropriate action through its usual communication channels.

The Commission informs the authorities of third countries of notifications concerning products manufactured in, distributed to or dispatched from these countries. However, the fact that a country is mentioned as the origin of a product does not necessarily imply that the identified hazard(s) originated in the country concerned.

The notifications reported in the weekly overviews published on the European Commission's web site are so-called "original notifications", representing a new case reported on a health risk detected in one or more consignments of a food or feed. On these cases, control authorities are exchanging additional information on measures taken and outcome of investigations. This additional information does not appear in the publicly accessible weekly overviews.

A short explanation about some of the notification tables' columns follows.

The "notification basis" column, appearing in the alert and information notifications tables, indicates what type of control, report or investigation lay at the basis of the notification:

- border control – screening sample: notification initiated through a sample taken at a border post for analysis but the consignment was meanwhile released to the market (“screening sample”);
- official control on the market: official control on the EU (and EEA) internal market;
- company own-check: notification initiated through a company notifying the outcome of an own-check to the competent authority;
- consumer complaint: notification initiated through a consumer lodging a complaint with the competent authority;
- food poisoning outbreak: reports of a food poisoning leading to the notification of a risk in a food on the market that has caused the food poisoning.

The status column is a combination of two values, "distribution status" and "action (to be) taken".

The distribution status indicates knowledge existing **at the time of notification** about the possible distribution of the product on the market. The concept "market" is to be interpreted in a geographical way: "the internal Community market" i.e. this does not necessarily mean that the product is already on the shelves available to consumers, as often it is not.

The action (to be) taken represents the action already taken or to be taken by the notifying country **at the time of notification**. If "no action taken" is given for an **alert** notification, this normally indicates that the product is not on the market of the notifying country (therefore: no action taken by the notifying country) but it may be on the market of other member countries.

Week 2009/11

TABLE 1: ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
09/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0285	aflatoxins (B1 = 70 / B1 = 121 / B1 = 96 / B1 = 147 / B1 = 79 µg/kg - ppb) in white sunflower seeds from Egypt, via the United Kingdom and via Belgium	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
09/03/2009	Germany	2009.0287	migration of DEHP - di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (82 mg/kg - ppm) from white plastic spray bag from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
09/03/2009	Germany	2009.0288	aflatoxins (B1 = 19.4; Tot. = 22.9 µg/kg - ppb) in cocktail nuts from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
09/03/2009	Austria	2009.0289	undeclared gluten (3600 mg/kg - label only mentions possible traces of gluten) in organic buckwheat flour from Austria, with raw material from China	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
09/03/2009	Spain	2009.0290	Chinese star anise (<i>Illicium verum</i>) from Vietnam contaminated with Japanese star anise (<i>Illicium anisatum</i>)	food poisoning	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
09/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0291	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (7 µg/kg - ppb) in freshwater headless shell on king prawns (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Bangladesh	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
11/03/2009	Italy	2009.0294	mercury (3.26 mg/kg - ppm) in kitefin shark (<i>Dalatias licha</i>) from Panama, via Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) seized
12/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0299	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (7; 1.5 µg/kg - ppb) in freshwater headless shell on shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Bangladesh	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
13/03/2009	France	2009.0300	adulteration (cow's milk between 2 and 10 %) of sheep's cheese from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
13/03/2009	Germany	2009.0301	migration of primary aromatic amines (4.8 mg/dm ²) from kitchen utensils from China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
13/03/2009	Italy	2009.0303	undeclared sulphite (47 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen pink shrimps (Pandalus Borealis) from Denmark	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) seized
13/03/2009	Spain	2009.0304	undeclared milk ingredient (20.6 mg/kg - ppm) in choco-nut paste from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) relabelled

TABLE 2: INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
09/03/2009	Malta	2009.0286	unauthorised substance vinpocetine in food supplement from the United States, via Poland	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
09/03/2009	Hungary	2009.0292	foreign body (gekko) in canned pineapple pieces in mildly sugared syrup from Thailand	consumer complaint	distribution restricted to notifying country
10/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.0293	carbofuran (0.1 mg/kg - ppm) and dimethoate (0.86 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh morning glory from Thailand	official control on the market	no stock left / no action taken
12/03/2009	Italy	2009.0295	residues of ncarbazine (7.6 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen chicken meat from Brazil	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
12/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0296	inadequate heat processing (failed result for phosphatase testing) of frozen steamed cooked diced chicken breast meat from Brazil	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
12/03/2009	the Czech Republic	2009.0297	3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD) (70.1 µg/kg - ppb) in soy sauce from Vietnam	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
12/03/2009	the Czech Republic	2009.0298	too high content of nitrate (412 mg/kg - ppm) in vegetable based baby food (puree with broccoli) from the Czech Republic	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from recipient(s)
12/03/2009	Finland	2009.ANH	too high content of colour E 124 - Ponceau 4R / cochineal red A (90 mg/kg - ppm) in cherry flavoured penis shaped candies from China, via Germany	official control on the market	no distribution / product (to be) detained

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
13/03/2009	Germany	2009.0302	spoilage of frozen rainbow trout from Norway	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
13/03/2009	Germany	2009.0305	salami from Italy infested with moulds (Penicillium spp. and Mucor spp.)	consumer complaint	product past best before date / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

TABLE 3: BORDER REJECTIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
09/03/2009	Italy	2009.AMR	too high level of total migration (763 mg/dm ²) from toasters from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
10/03/2009	France	2009.AMS	aflatoxins (B1 = 5.8; Tot. = 10.7 / B1 = <0.3; Tot. = <0.8 µg/kg - ppb) in dried Protoben figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
11/03/2009	Poland	2009.AMT	dried sultana raisins from Turkey infested with moulds	product (to be) detained
11/03/2009	Spain	2009.AMU	aflatoxins (B1 > 24; Tot. > 24 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from Iran	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
11/03/2009	Spain	2009.AMV	histamine (347.2 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares) from India	product (to be) destroyed
11/03/2009	Spain	2009.AMW	altered organoleptic characteristics of pickled cucumbers and gherkins from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
11/03/2009	Italy	2009.AMX	fenpropathrin (0.05 mg/kg - ppm) and ethion (0.45 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh green beans from Egypt	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
11/03/2009	Germany	2009.AMY	aflatoxins (B1 = 49.0; Tot. = 57.6 µg/kg - ppb) in peanuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched
11/03/2009	Spain	2009.AMZ	aflatoxins (B1 > 24; Tot. > 24 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
11/03/2009	Germany	2009.ANA	aflatoxins (B1 = 15.51; Tot. = 34.56 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
12/03/2009	Spain	2009.ANB	black particles (on the bottom of the can) in canned palm hearts from Guatemala	product (to be) re-dispatched
12/03/2009	Spain	2009.ANC	parasitic infestation (Gymnorhynchus gigas) of chilled ray's bream (Brama brama) from Morocco	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
12/03/2009	Spain	2009.AND	parasitic infestation (Gymnorhynchus gigas) of chilled ray's bream (Brama brama) from Morocco	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
12/03/2009	Spain	2009.ANE	parasitic infestation (Gymnorhynchus gigas) of chilled ray's bream (Brama brama) from Morocco	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
12/03/2009	Spain	2009.ANF	parasitic infestation (Gymnorhynchus gigas) of chilled ray's bream (Brama brama) from Morocco	product (to be) redispatched or destroyed
12/03/2009	Italy	2009.ANG	ethion (0.09 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh strawberries from Egypt	product (to be) destroyed
12/03/2009	Ireland	2009.ANI	unauthorised colour Sudan 4 (9.7 / 5.2 mg/kg - ppm) in palm oil from Nigeria	product (to be) destroyed
13/03/2009	Germany	2009.ANJ	cadmium (1.45 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen whole cleaned cuttlefish (Sepia spp.) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
13/03/2009	Spain	2009.ANK	aflatoxins (B1 = 8.5; Tot. = 9.8 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from China	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
13/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.ANL	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (2.6 µg/kg - ppb) in raw block frozen headless scampis from India	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
13/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.ANM	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (5.5 µg/kg - ppb) in raw block frozen freshwater farmed headless shell on shrimps from Bangladesh	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
13/03/2009	Austria	2009.ANN	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.65; Tot. = 18.76 µg/kg - ppb) in hazelnut kernels (13-15 mm) from Turkey	product (to be) detained
13/03/2009	Austria	2009.ANO	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.35; Tot. = 4.4 / B1 = 2.34; Tot. = 4.4 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted hazelnut paste from Turkey	product (to be) detained
13/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.ANP	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.5; Tot. = 14.5 / B1 = 12.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from Paraguay	physical treatment - blanching
13/03/2009	Italy	2009.ANQ	too high content of nitrate (160 mg/kg - ppm) in chilled swordfish loins (Xiphias gladius) from Chile	product (to be) destroyed
13/03/2009	Germany	2009.ANR	too high count of Enterobacteriaceae (1000; 730; 1000 CFU/g) in dog or cat food from Mexico	product (to be) re-dispached

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
11/03/2009	inf01	2009.0278	10	migration of formaldehyde from melamine cups from the Netherlands	The analytical result is expressed in "mg/dm ² " instead of "mg/kg".

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
10/03/2009	inf02	2009.ABF	2	bad hygienic state of chilled tuna fillets from The Maldives	On the basis of a declaration of Italian authority the product was destroyed because it became expired. No analyses were performed on it. For that reason since no risk has been detected in relation to the product, the notification should be withdrawn.