

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2009/12

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
16/03/2009	the Czech Republic	2009.0310	unauthorised substances sildenafil (1.98 mg/capsule) and tadalafil (15.4 mg/capsule) in food supplement from China	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/03/2009	Ireland	2009.0311	migration of primary aromatic amines (636.9 µg/kg - ppb) from kitchen utensils from unknown origin, via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/03/2009	Ireland	2009.0312	migration of primary aromatic amines (4277.2 µg/kg - ppb) from kitchen utensils - spaghetti server from unknown origin, via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/03/2009	Ireland	2009.0313	migration of primary aromatic amines (2772.3 µg/kg - ppb) from kitchen utensils from China (Hong Kong), via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/03/2009	the Czech Republic	2009.0314	unauthorised substances sildenafil (0.37; 0.06 mg/capsule) and tadalafil (10; 1.86 mg/capsule) in chewing gums from France, with raw material from China	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
17/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0316	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (16 µg/kg - ppb) in block frozen headless shell on fresh water shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from India	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
17/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0318	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (2.9 µg/kg - ppb) in fresh water headless shell on raw block frozen shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Bangladesh	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
19/03/2009	Germany	2009.0325	tin (910 mg/kg - ppm) in canned olives filled with lemon paste from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
19/03/2009	Italy	2009.0326	mercury (1.3 mg/kg - ppm) in chilled red tuna (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>) from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
20/03/2009	Italy	2009.0332	mercury (1.7 mg/kg - ppm) in vacuum packed swordfish fillets (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) from Vietnam, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
20/03/2009	Poland	2009.0333	Salmonella (5 out of 5 samples /10g) in frozen chicken döner from Poland	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
20/03/2009	Slovenia	2009.0335	Enterobacter sakazakii (presence /10g) in dried infant formulae from Austria	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
20/03/2009	Ireland	2009.0336	migration of primary aromatic amines (4423 µg/kg - ppb) from kitchen utensils from China, via China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

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
16/03/2009	Belgium	2009.0306	prohibited substances nitrofurantoin (metabolite) furazolidone (AOZ) (2.6 µg/kg - ppb) and nitrofurantoin (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (8; 10 µg/kg - ppb) in fresh water headless shell on IQF shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from India	border control - consignment released	no distribution / product (to be) detained
16/03/2009	Italy	2009.0307	undeclared milk ingredient (2 mg/kg - ppm) and lactose (2.5 mg/kg - ppm) in chocolate bar with nuts from the Netherlands	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
16/03/2009	Finland	2009.0308	unlabelled irradiation (0.84; 0.11) and irradiation in an unauthorised facility of herbal tea from the United States, via Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / no action taken
16/03/2009	Malta	2009.0309	sliced lemon cake from the United Kingdom infested with moulds	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
17/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0315	omethoate (0.04 mg/kg - ppm) and dimethoate (0.01 mg/kg - ppm) in seedless green grapes from Chile	official control on the market	product already consumed / no stock left
17/03/2009	Italy	2009.0317	carbon monoxide treatment (presence) of defrosted tuna from the Netherlands	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
18/03/2009	Italy	2009.0319	unlabelled dessicative bag (not mentioned on the product label) in dried grilled squid from Vietnam, via France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) seized

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
18/03/2009	Poland	2009.0320	Salmonella (in 1 out of 5 samples /10g) in frozen chicken hearts from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment - heat treatment
18/03/2009	Poland	2009.0321	Salmonella (presence /25g) in turkey shoulder medallions from Ireland, via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment - heat treatment
18/03/2009	Italy	2009.0322	dead mouse in frozen chopped spinach from France	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible)
18/03/2009	Hungary	2009.AOK	Salmonella (presence /25g) in linseed oilcake from Ukraine	border control - consignment released	no distribution / destination of the product identified
19/03/2009	Germany	2009.0323	metal fragments in linseed from China	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / informing recipients
19/03/2009	Finland	2009.0324	omethoate (0.33 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh chives from Thailand, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	product already consumed / reinforced checking
19/03/2009	Italy	2009.0327	Salmonella Bredeney (multiresistant) in chicken meat (Gallus gallus) from Brazil	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
19/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0328	aflatoxins (B1 = 194.0; Tot. = 226.2 µg/kg - ppb) in peanut butter from Ghana	official control on the market	information on distribution not (yet) available / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
20/03/2009	Italy	2009.0329	mercury (2.20 mg/kg - ppm) in smoothhound shark (Mustelus mustelus) from Croatia	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
20/03/2009	Germany	2009.0330	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.5; Tot. = 7.1 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted and salted pistachio nuts with shell from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
20/03/2009	the Slovak Republic	2009.0331	migration of primary aromatic amines (0.2091; 0.0867; 0.1078; 0.4490; 0.2002; 0.2330 mg/dm ²) from black nylon soup spoon from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
20/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0334	Salmonella (presence /25g) in sesame paste halva from Syria	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
20/03/2009	Ireland	2009.0337	migration of primary aromatic amines (15759.6 µg/kg - ppb) from slotted spoon from China, via China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / 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
16/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.ANS	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.4 µg/dm ²) in groundnut kernels from Brazil	physical treatment - sorting
16/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.ANT	aflatoxins (B1 = 14.8; Tot. = 17.9 µg/dm ²) in peanuts from the United States	product (to be) detained
16/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.ANU	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.0 µg/kg - ppb) in peanuts from Argentina	product (to be) detained
16/03/2009	Belgium	2009.ANV	unauthorised colour Sudan 4 (5.2 mg/kg - ppm) in palm oil in bottle from Senegal	product (to be) destroyed
16/03/2009	Belgium	2009.ANW	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (6.1 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen headless fresh water IQF shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
16/03/2009	Italy	2009.ANX	migration of chromium (0.39 mg/dm ²) and of nickel (0.03 mg/dm ²) from stainless steel cutlery from Thailand	product (to be) re-dispatched
16/03/2009	Italy	2009.ANY	migration of formaldehyde (5.6 mg/kg - ppm) from kitchen utensils from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
16/03/2009	Poland	2009.ANZ	rodent excrements in hibiscus flower from Nigeria infested with moulds	product (to be) detained
17/03/2009	Greece	2009.AOA	aflatoxins (B1 = 23.1; Tot. = 25.6 µg/kg - ppb) in almonds without shell from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/03/2009	Greece	2009.AOB	too high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i> (2400 CFU/g) in chilled clams from Turkey	product (to be) destroyed
17/03/2009	Greece	2009.AOC	too high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i> (1700 CFU/g) in chilled clams from Turkey	product (to be) destroyed
17/03/2009	Greece	2009.AOD	too high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i> (750 CFU/g) in chilled Mediterranean cockles (<i>Acanthocardia tuberculatum</i>) from Turkey	physical treatment
17/03/2009	Belgium	2009.AOE	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) furazolidone (AOZ) (2.4 µg/kg - ppb) in black tiger shrimps (<i>Penaeus monodon</i>) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/03/2009	Norway	2009.AOF	parasitic infestation (<i>Sarcocystis cruzi</i>) of frozen bovine tenderloins from Argentina	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/03/2009	Germany	2009.AOG	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 2.5; Tot. = 2.5 / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND µg/kg - ppb) in raw pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/03/2009	Germany	2009.AOH	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.0; Tot. = 5.0 / B1 = 2.7; Tot. = 4.9 / B1 = 3.2; Tot. = 5.5 µg/kg - ppb) in ground roasted hazelnuts from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
18/03/2009	Spain	2009.AOI	parasitic infestation of frozen monkfish (<i>Lophius</i> spp.) from Namibia	product (to be) destroyed
18/03/2009	Finland	2009.AOJ	omethoate and dimethoate (sum: 0.037 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh green aubergines from Thailand	product (to be) destroyed
19/03/2009	Italy	2009.AOL	aflatoxins (B1 = 101.9; Tot. = 107.7 / B1 = 3.3; Tot. = 3.8 / B1 = 1.2; Tot. = 1.7 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts with shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
19/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AOM	aflatoxins (B1 = 52.0; Tot. = 59.4 / B1 = 13.6; Tot. = 16.4 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from India	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	Slovenia	2009.AON	cadmium (1.5 mg/kg - ppm) in dried shitake mushrooms (Lentinula edodes) from China	product under customs seals
19/03/2009	Greece	2009.AOO	bad hygienic state of frozen octopus from Morocco	product (to be) destroyed
19/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AOP	aflatoxins (B1 = 10.0; Tot. = 12.8 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from Paraguay	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AOQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.9; Tot. = 9.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from Paraguay	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AOR	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.9; Tot. = 17.5 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from Argentina	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AOS	aflatoxins (B1 = 10.8; Tot. = 21.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from Argentina	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AOT	aflatoxins (B1 = 8.8; Tot. = 14.7 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts from Argentina	product (to be) detained
19/03/2009	Cyprus	2009.AOU	unauthorised use of colour E 122 - azorubine in strawberry flavoured breakfast cereal from South Africa	product (to be) destroyed
19/03/2009	Italy	2009.AOV	migration of chromium (1.5; 3 mg/kg - ppm) from kitchen knives from China (Hong Kong)	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/03/2009	Germany	2009.AOW	histamine in frozen tuna steaks from Vietnam, dispatched from Thailand	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/03/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AOX	too high content of sulphite (3000 mg/kg - ppm) in dried apricots from Iran	product (to be) destroyed
20/03/2009	France	2009.AOY	histamine (204.6 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen dolphinfish fillets (Coryphaena hippurus) from Peru	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
16/03/2009	inf01	2008.BTJ	46	migration of chromium from stainless steel knives from China	Only the national legal limit for migration of chromium is exceeded and the notification's subject is modified accordingly.
19/03/2009	inf01	2009.0012	2	lead and tin in canned stuffed olives from Spain	The canned product originates from Spain and not from Germany. Therefore the notification is upgraded to alert.
16/03/2009	inf01	2009.0302	11	spoilage of frozen rainbow trout from Norway	The notification's subject is modified to: "spoilage of frozen rainbow trout from Norway".
16/03/2009	inf01	2009.ANH	11	too high content of colour E 124 - Ponceau 4R / cochineal red A in cherry flavoured penis shaped candies from China, via Germany	This notification is not a border rejection and has therefore been reclassified as an information notification.

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFI- CATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
18/03/2009	inf02	2008.1483	47	too high content of sulphite in frozen whole raw shrimps from Spain, with raw material from Thailand	The competent authorities of the Autonomous Community of Galicia informed that the counter analysis and decisive analysis corresponding to the official sample which gave rise to this alert have been favourable. Following this information Spain requests the withdrawal of this notification from the alert network.