

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2009/19

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
04/05/2009	Cyprus	2009.0572	undeclared gluten (90 mg/kg - ppm) in corn flour from Greece	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
06/05/2009	Germany	2009.0579	high content of iodine (2827 mg/kg - ppm) in dried sliced seaweed from China, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
06/05/2009	Estonia	2009.0581	glass fragment (5x2cm) in pickled gherkins in glass jar from Vietnam, via Lithuania	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
06/05/2009	Italy	2009.0582	mercury (1.30 mg/kg - ppm) in smoked swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) from Denmark	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
08/05/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0587	suffocation risk as a result of the consumption (bottle cap came off) of bottled flavoured water drink from the United Kingdom	consumer complaint	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
04/05/2009	France	2009.0574	too high content of colour E 102 - tartrazine (133 mg/l), of colour E 110 - Sunset Yellow FCF (138 mg/l) and of colour E 122 - azorubine (176 mg/l) in soft drink from Spain, via France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
05/05/2009	Finland	2009.0575	<i>Salmonella anatum</i> (presence /25g) in maize gluten from the Netherlands, via Denmark	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment - acid treatment
05/05/2009	Luxembourg	2009.0576	fraud - expiry dates changed of manioc flour from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible)

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
05/05/2009	Belgium	2009.0577	Salmonella Mbandaka in soybean meal from Belgium	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
05/05/2009	Italy	2009.0578	too high count of Escherichia coli (1100 MPN/100g) in live clams from Turkey	border control - consignment released	product already consumed / reinforced checking
06/05/2009	Austria	2009.0580	Salmonella in unhusked sesame seeds from India	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
06/05/2009	Italy	2009.0583	cadmium (2.92 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (Cancer pagurus) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
07/05/2009	Malta	2009.0584	corned beef from Brazil with defective packaging	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
07/05/2009	Finland	2009.0585	migration of chromium (16<=>34 mg/dm ²) from metal whisk from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
07/05/2009	Denmark	2009.0586	bad temperature control - rupture of the cold chain - of, bad traceability records for and insufficient labelling of frozen fish dispatched from the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
08/05/2009	Slovenia	2009.0588	histamine (151; 56; 36; 25; <20; 38; 466; 91; 182 mg/kg - ppm) in canned tuna fillets in olive oil from Croatia	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
08/05/2009	Austria	2009.0589	unauthorised substance diafenthiuron (0.078 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh peppers from Turkey, via Germany	official control on the market	product already consumed / no stock left
08/05/2009	Cyprus	2009.0590	Listeria monocytogenes in preserved herring fillets from Belarus	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) detained
08/05/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0591	Salmonella (presence /25g) in ready-to-eat packaged sesame seeds with raw material from Venezuela and India	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
08/05/2009	Sweden	2009.0592	Salmonella enterica in sautéed reindeer (renskav) manufactured in Sweden, with raw material from Norway	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
08/05/2009	Italy	2009.0593	cadmium (4 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (<i>Cancer pagurus</i>) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed

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
04/05/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AWP	bad hygienic state of frozen surimi (<i>Nemipterus spp</i>) from Thailand	product (to be) destroyed
04/05/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AWQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from Argentina	product (to be) detained
04/05/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AWR	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.1 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from Argentina	product (to be) detained
04/05/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AWS	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.7 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from Argentina	product (to be) detained
05/05/2009	Norway	2009.AWT	unauthorised food additive propylene oxide (PPO) in shelled almonds from the United States	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
05/05/2009	Italy	2009.AWU	aflatoxins (B1 = 68.2; Tot. = 110.5 / B1 = 11.2; Tot. = 53.9 / B1 = 8.8; Tot. = 26.1 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
05/05/2009	Italy	2009.AWV	aflatoxins (B1 = 1.85; Tot. = 2.02 / B1 = 68; Tot. = 72.59 / B1 = 56.34; Tot. = 61.46 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched
05/05/2009	Spain	2009.AWW	spoilage of fresh melons from Brazil	product (to be) destroyed
05/05/2009	Norway	2009.AWX	unauthorised food additive propylene oxide (PPO) in shelled almonds from the United States	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
05/05/2009	Spain	2009.AWY	spoilage of fresh melons from Brazil	product (to be) destroyed
05/05/2009	Italy	2009.AWZ	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.2; Tot. = 7.8 µg/kg - ppb) in peanuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched
06/05/2009	Germany	2009.AXA	expired health certificate(s) for pistachio kernels from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
06/05/2009	Spain	2009.AXB	bad hygienic state of melons from Panama	product (to be) detained
06/05/2009	Spain	2009.AXC	bad hygienic state of melons from Panama	product (to be) destroyed
07/05/2009	France	2009.AXD	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.4; Tot. = 9.9 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
07/05/2009	France	2009.AXE	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.5; Tot. = 6.2 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
07/05/2009	France	2009.AXF	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.46; Tot. = 7.48 µg/kg - ppb) in grilled hazelnut kernels from Turkey	product under customs seals
07/05/2009	Norway	2009.AXG	unauthorised food additive propylene oxide (PPO) in shelled almonds from the United States	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
07/05/2009	Germany	2009.AXH	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (4.1; 2.0 µg/kg - ppb) in chilled shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Sri Lanka	product (to be) destroyed
07/05/2009	Belgium	2009.AXI	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (6 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen freshwater headless shell on IQF shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
07/05/2009	Italy	2009.AXJ	suspicion of illegal import of hard shell clams (<i>Venus Verrucosa</i>) from Croatia	product (to be) destroyed

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
08/05/2009	Germany	2009.AXK	aflatoxins (B1 = 62; Tot. = 90 µg/kg - ppb) in shelled pistachios from Turkey	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
08/05/2009	Spain	2009.AXL	bad hygienic state of melons from Brazil	product (to be) destroyed
08/05/2009	Germany	2009.AXM	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (total: 2.5; bound: 1.2 µg/kg - ppb) in chilled shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Sri Lanka	product (to be) destroyed
08/05/2009	Germany	2009.AXN	prohibited substance nitrofurane (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (total: 6.6; bound: 2.4 µg/kg - ppb) in chilled shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Sri Lanka	product (to be) destroyed
08/05/2009	Spain	2009.AXO	bad hygienic state of melons from Brazil	product (to be) destroyed
08/05/2009	the Netherlands	2009.AXP	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 5.0; Tot. = 6.2 / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND µg/kg - ppb) in blanched peanuts from Argentina	product (to be) detained
08/05/2009	Cyprus	2009.AXQ	methamidophos (0.024 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh carrots from Israel	product (to be) destroyed
08/05/2009	Bulgaria	2009.AXR	suspicion of attempt to illegally import (traces of old removed labels of other establishments than mentioned on the certificates) frozen hake from Ecuador	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
06/05/2009	inf01	2009.ATS	16	improper health certificate(s) for frozen beef from Brazil	The notification concerns an improper health certificate rather than a falsified health certificate. The subject of the notification is changed accordingly.

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
04/05/2009	add01	2009.AIE	7	aflatoxins in almonds from the United States	2009.AIE is a duplicate of 2009.AAJ
08/05/2009	add02	2009.0303	11	undeclared sulphite in frozen pink shrimp (<i>Pandalus Borealis</i>) from Denmark	The counter analysis gave a favourable result, therefore the notification is withdrawn.