

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2008/21

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
19/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.0576	undeclared milk ingredient (casein 2228 mg/kg - ppm) in coffee drink from the Netherlands, via Cyprus	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) relabelled
20/05/2008	Estonia	2008.0584	Salmonella spp. in frozen whole hens from Lithuania	food poisoning outbreak	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
20/05/2008	Italy	2008.0585	Escherichia coli (1300 MPN/100g) in live clams (Venus gallina) from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
20/05/2008	the Netherlands	2008.0586	Salmonella spp. (presence /25g) in white imitation chocolate with yoghurt flavour from the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / informing recipients
22/05/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0591	glass fragments in pickled dill cucumbers from Poland	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	Finland	2008.0595	Listeria monocytogenes (5000; 3300; 580 CFU/g) in vacuum packed raw pickled sliced rainbow trout fillet from Estonia	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
23/05/2008	Italy	2008.0597	Listeria monocytogenes (420 CFU/g) in smoked sliced salmon from Denmark	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
23/05/2008	France	2008.0600	Diarrhoeic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) toxins (positive mouse test) in live mussels from Greece	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	France	2008.0601	bulging packaging of canned lettuce hearts from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale

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
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.0577	methamidophos (0.021 mg/kg - ppm), acephate (0.11 mg/kg - ppm) and triazophos (0.087 mg/kg - ppm) in okra from India	border control - screening sample	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) detained
19/05/2008	Ireland	2008.0578	foreign body (piece of metal wire) in ice-cream from the United Kingdom, via Ireland	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / no action taken
19/05/2008	Spain	2008.0579	unauthorised establishment for food colouring agents from Spain	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country
19/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.0580	dimethoate (0.19 mg/kg - ppm) in peaches from Israel	border control - screening sample	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
19/05/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0581	badly cooked (undercooked) sliced steam-cooked chicken fillets from Belgium	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
19/05/2008	Belgium	2008.0582	Salmonella (presence /25g) in dog chews from Thailand	border control - screening sample	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) detained
20/05/2008	Germany	2008.0583	Vibrio vulnificus and high number of aerobic plate counts (Pseudomonas dominated) in chilled shrimps (Metapenaeus spp) from India	border control - screening sample	product already consumed / no action taken
20/05/2008	Latvia	2008.0587	altered organoleptic characteristics of curd snack with raisins from Lithuania infested with moulds (9.0 x 10000 CFU/g)	consumer complaint	product past best before date / no stock left
20/05/2008	Poland	2008.0588	arsenic (6.48 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen haddock loins from China	border control - screening sample	distribution restricted to notifying country
21/05/2008	Latvia	2008.0589	too high content of unlabelled E 210 - benzoic acid (928 mg/kg - ppm) in chyawanprash jam with honey from India	border control - screening sample	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
22/05/2008	the Netherlands	2008.0590	organic strawberry flavour water ice from Italy probably infested with moulds	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
22/05/2008	Denmark	2008.0592	Salmonella paratyphi b (var. Java - multiresistant in 3 out of 12 samples /25g) in fresh poultry thighs from Belgium	official control on the market	product past best before date / public warning - press release
22/05/2008	Italy	2008.0593	Yersinia enterocolitica (presence /25g) in chilled beef from the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
23/05/2008	Finland	2008.0594	Listeria monocytogenes (480; 420 CFU/g) in sliced vacuum packed salmon from Sweden	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) recalled from consumer
23/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.0596	too high content of sulphite (2528 mg/kg - ppm) in dried apricots packaged in Greece and repackaged in Cyprus	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
23/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.0598	too high content of sulphite (2538 mg/kg - ppm) in dried apricots packaged in Greece and repackaged in Cyprus, raw material from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
23/05/2008	the Czech Republic	2008.0599	too high content of E 452 - polyphosphates (6.107 g/kg) in blue whiting fillets from the Slovak Republic	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
23/05/2008	Italy	2008.0602	cadmium (3.0 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (Cancer pagurus) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	Italy	2008.0603	cadmium (1.5 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (Maja squinado) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	Luxembourg	2008.0604	thiabendazole (0.81 mg/kg - ppm), imazalil (0.25 mg/kg - ppm) and dimethoate (0.12 mg/kg - ppm) in green beans from Kenya, via Belgium	official control on the market	product already consumed / no stock left

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
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATL	aflatoxins (B1 = 0.6; Tot. = 0.6 / B1 = 33.7; Tot. = 37.3 / B1 = 0.3; Tot. = 0.3 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATM	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 11.3; Tot. = 11.3 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATN	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.3; Tot. = 7.9 / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 0.5; Tot. = 0.5 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATO	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 10.1; Tot. = 10.8 / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATP	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 11.0; Tot. = 11.7 / B1 = 0.2; Tot. = 0.2 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
19/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 26.4; Tot. = 28.1 / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 2.9; Tot. < 3.1 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Bulgaria	2008.ATR	aflatoxins (B1 = 0.6; Tot. = 0.8 / B1 = 3.5; Tot. = 10.4 / B1 = 2.0; Tot. = 3.3 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched groundnut kernels from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
19/05/2008	Lithuania	2008.ATS	parasitic infestation with Anisakis of frozen hake fillets from China	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
20/05/2008	Italy	2008.ATT	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.30; Tot. = 8.40 µg/kg - ppb) in melon seeds from Nigeria	product (to be) re-dispatched
20/05/2008	Finland	2008.ATU	too high content of sulphite (160 mg/kg - ppm) in whole pickled garlic in brine from Thailand	product (to be) detained
20/05/2008	Germany	2008.ATV	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.58; Tot. = 7.46 µg/kg - ppb) in hazelnut kernels from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
20/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.ATW	unauthorised use of colour E 127 - erythrosine in fruit flavour dragees from Indonesia, dispatched from Singapore	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
21/05/2008	Iceland	2008.ATX	Salmonella spp. (in 5 out of 9 samples) in frozen kangaroo meat from Australia	product (to be) detained
21/05/2008	Finland	2008.ATY	benzo(a)pyrene (42 µg/kg - ppb) in seasoned coconut oil from the United States	product (to be) detained
22/05/2008	Italy	2008.ATZ	spoilage of and absence of labelling on animal casings of pigs and horses from Albania	product (to be) re-dispatched
22/05/2008	Italy	2008.AUA	aflatoxins (B1 = 42.1; Tot. = 44.4 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts with shell from the United States	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
22/05/2008	Spain	2008.AUB	unauthorised genetically modified (rice BT63) rice protein concentrate from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
22/05/2008	Finland	2008.AUC	benzo(a)pyrene (3.7; 3.3 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen marinated semi-dried gourmet tomato from Turkey	product (to be) detained
22/05/2008	Sweden	2008.AUD	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.1; Tot. = 10.0 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted hazelnuts from Turkey	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
22/05/2008	Italy	2008.AUE	too high level of total migration (8; 21 mg/dm ²) from steel and iron kitchen utensils from China	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
23/05/2008	Poland	2008.AUF	rodent excrements on hibiscus flowers from Egypt, also infested with moulds and with insects	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
21/05/2008	add01	2008.0511	19	mercury in frozen slices of swordfish from Spain	Because the sample which resulted positive for presence of mercury was not taken in conformity with the provisions of Regulation n. 333/2007, another sample was analysed, which resulted negative. Therefore the product was released and the notification is withdrawn.